editor's choice

PARENTAL ADVISORY
EXPLICIT CONTENT

Vagabond

Story & Art by Takehiko Inoue

Based on the novel "Musashi" by Eiji Yoshikawa

vol. 19

English Edition

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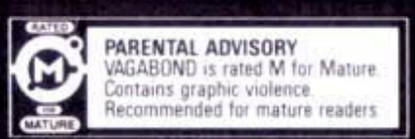
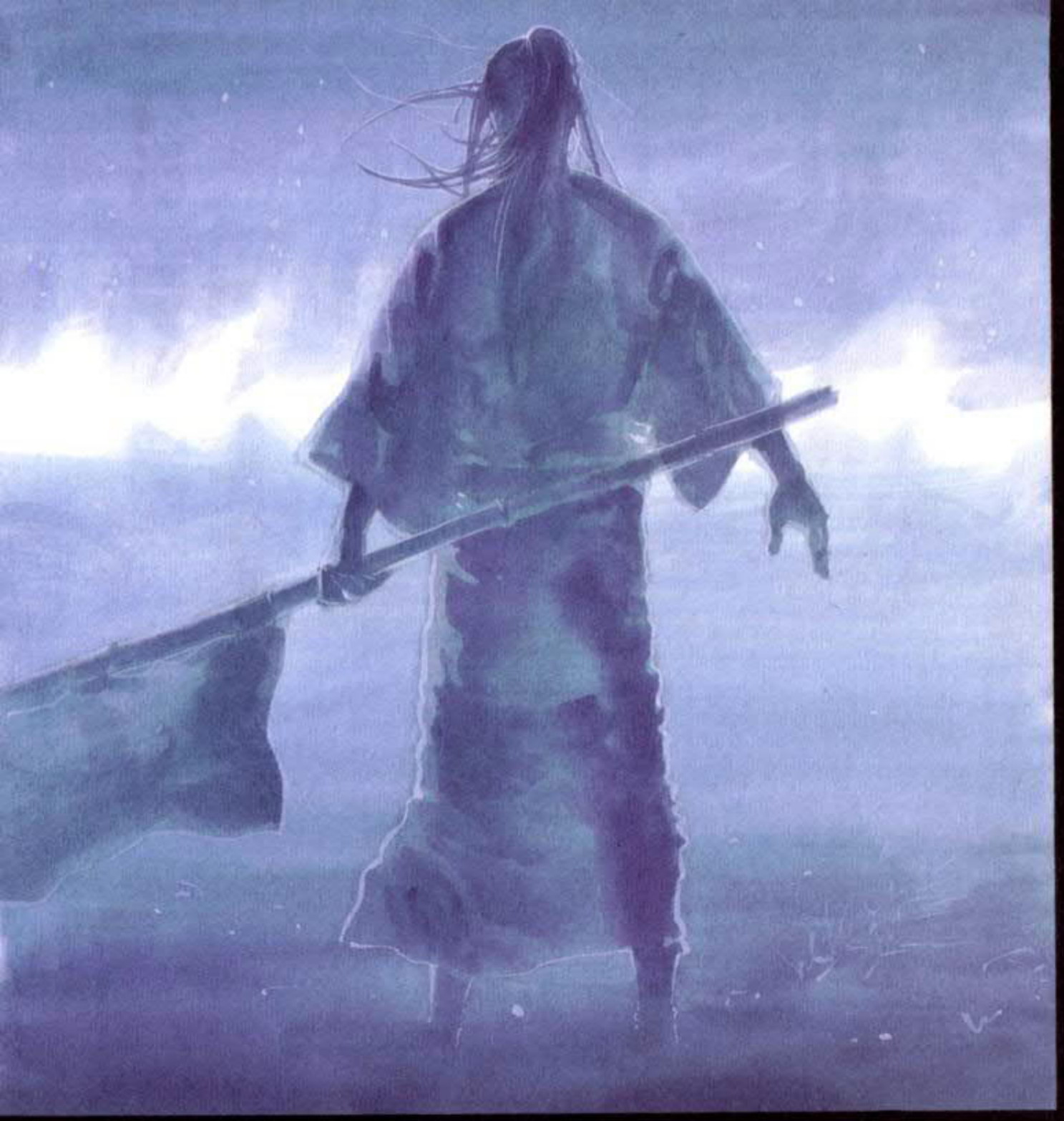




#165 Death Torches

Vagabond

vol. 19

Story & Art by Takehiko Inoue

Based on the novel "Musashi" by Eiji Yoshikawa

STILL ...
YOUR WAR DESTROYED OUR VILLAGE. YOU'VE EARNED OUR HATRED.
LOOKS QUITE RAGGED FOR A WARRIOR.
HE DOESN'T HAVE ANYTHING WORTH TAKING.
IS HE A REFUGEE SOLDIER ?!
HIS BANNER SAYS... HE'S "IN-VINCIBLE."
DIE!!

THIS KID'S STRONG !!
TUGG
GASP?!
BE CAREFUL !!
?
SENSEI !!
IT'S KOJIRŌ! HE'S...
FICH
FICH
DON'T LET HIM GET AWAY.
SURROUND HIM!!

FWOOSH
!!
HE'S SURROUNDED BY REFUGEE HUNTERS!!

SENSEI ?
HE CAN'T HEAR AND HE CAN'T TALK. HE CAN'T EXPLAIN WHO HE IS!!
WE HAVE TO RESCUE HIM!
SENSEI !!
TUP
TUP
WE HAVE TO HELP...
SENSEI !!
.....
HOW COULD HE DO THIS?
POOR KOJIRŌ ...!!
THIS IS TERRIBLE !!

SHIK
SENSEI, YOU TAKE KOJIRŌ INTO A BATTLEFIELD ...
...AND THEN YOU PROVOKE THE SOLDIERS TO ATTACK HIM.
YOU ARE DELIBERATELY THROWING HIM INTO PERILOUS SITUATIONS.

...YOU'RE GOING TO LEAVE HIM TO DIE.
MASTER ITTŌSAI !!

?
AND NOW...

I'M COMING, KOJIRŌ!
GO AND RESCUE HIM IF YOU WANT.
BUT PERSON-ALLY...

IT'S NOT RIGHT.
I BET THE RUMORS THAT YOU MADE YOUR DISCIPLES SLAUGHTER EACH OTHER ARE TRUE.

I'D BE... IN THE WAY?!
"YOU'RE NOT READY FOR THE STAGE YET..."
!!
BUT THAT'S JUST ME.
...I'D PREFER NOT TO HAVE SOME GREEN SWORDSMAN GET IN MY WAY.
THOSE MEN BACK THERE...
...NOR ONE OF TECHNIQUE ...
THIS IS NO TEST OF SKILL...

...THEY'RE JUST OUT TO KILL...
HUF
HUF
HUF
...TEEMING WITH HATRED AND DISDAIN FOR THE SOLDIERS RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR LOSSES.
GASP
FICH
FICH
FICH
THEY SEEK RETRIBUTION FOR EVERYTHING THEY LOST AS A CONSEQUENCE OF THIS WAR.

THERE ARE MORE PEOPLE OVER THAT WAY!!
AND IN THIS POST-WAR ANARCHY, THEIR HATRED EXPLODES INTO A BLOODTHIRSTY DRIVE...
FICH
FICH
FICH
OVER THERE!
THERE THEY ARE!!
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
"SLAUGHTER ALL SAMURAI..."
THEY BECOME DRIVEN TOWARDS THIS SOLE PURPOSE.

AUHH!!!
FICH
FICH
FICH
KILL THEM ALL!!
AUHH!!
HEY...
NOW WE'RE SURROUNDED TOO.
ALL RIGHT...
KOJIRŌ MUST NOW FIGHT FOR HIS OWN SURVIVAL!
KILL THEM !!
FICH
FICH
FICH

THWUNK
!!

YOU HAVE TO SAVE YOURSELF BEFORE YOU EVEN THINK OF HELPING OTHERS, GONNOSUKE!!
YES, SIR!!
HEH HEH HEH HEH!
I WON'T DIE HERE IN THIS PLACE!!
NOT YET... I'M ONLY FIFTEEN!!
I'LL BE READY FOR THE STAGE IN DUE TIME!!
I STILL HAVE TO DEVELOP MY OWN STYLE OF FIGHTING !!
YAHH!

!!
GRB
FWOOSH
THWOK
URGH
YAHH!
FICH
FICH

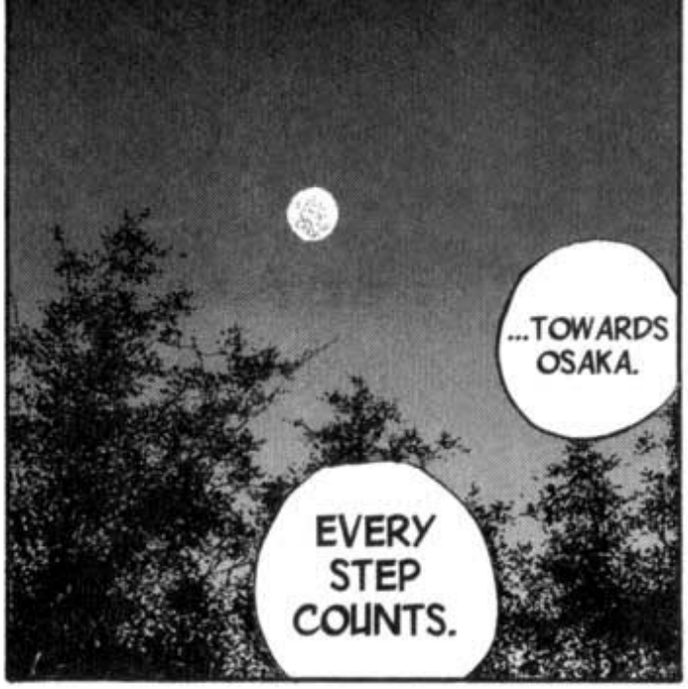
SWIK
HUH
?
SLISH

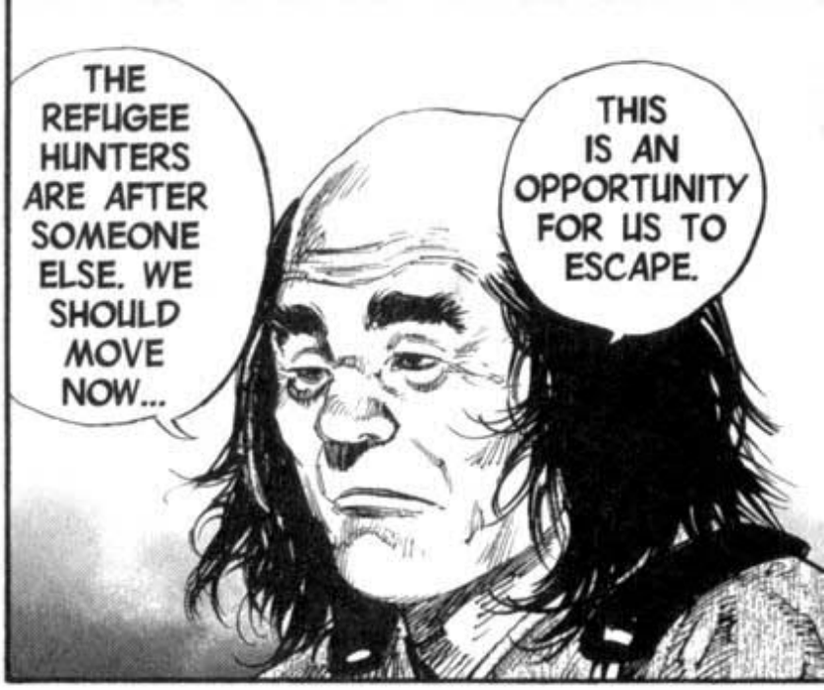
FICH
WHMP

SLISH
FSSH
ARRGH
AUHH...

FWSSH!
FWSSH!

FWSHH
THE TORCHES ARE LEAPING ABOUT...
THERE'S QUITE A BATTLE GOING ON OVER THERE...
HUF
...CHAL-LENGING THEIR FATES.
SO THERE ARE OTHER SURVIVORS ...


EVERY STEP COUNTS.
...TOWARDS OSAKA.


THIS IS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR US TO ESCAPE.
THE REFUGEE HUNTERS ARE AFTER SOMEONE ELSE. WE SHOULD MOVE NOW...

HUF
HUF
HUF

HUF
HUF
HUF
SHINJIRŌ ...
YOU'RE IN NO CONDITION TO WALK, SHINJIRŌ.

.....

KILL HIM.

KILL HIM.
THINGS WILL GET COMPLICATED IF HE IS CAUGHT ALIVE.

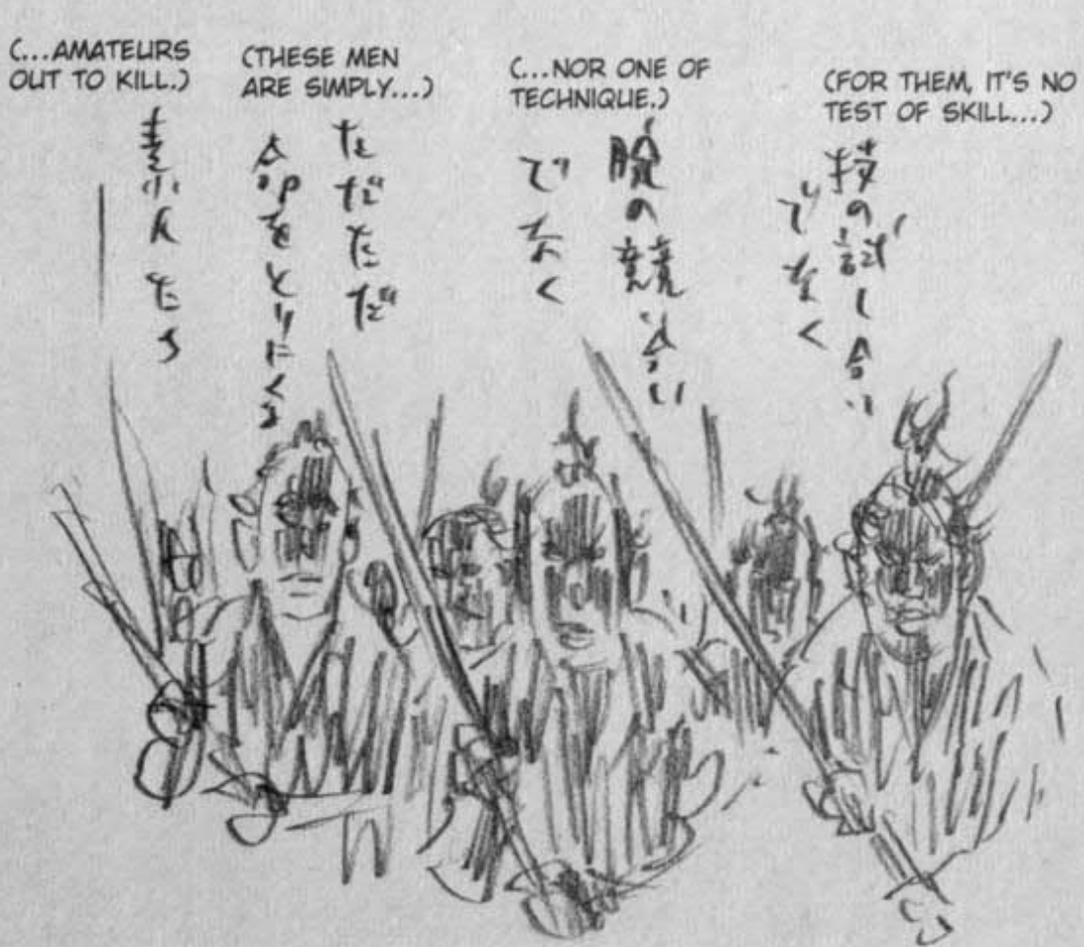
HUF
HUF
HUF
FICH

KOUN ...
FICH
COME! LET'S GO!
KOUN.
YOU'RE JEOPARDIZING YOUR OWN LIFE, KOUN.
WE'LL SURVIVE.

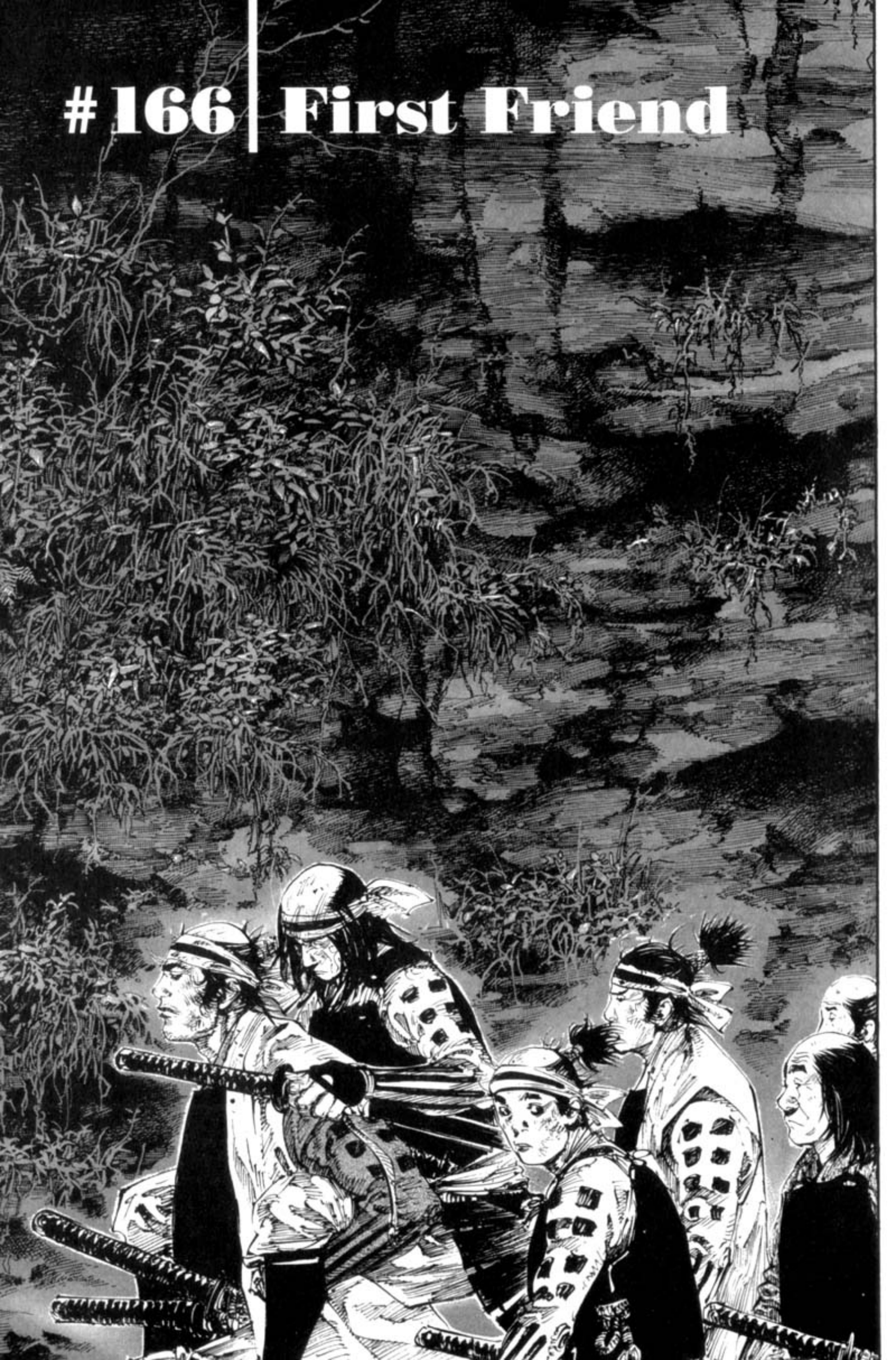
HE'S RUNNING!
THAT WAY!
AFTER HIM! GO!
CUT HIM OFF!
HUF
HUF
HUF
!
GASP!
FICH

SLASH
SLASH
HUF
HUF
HUF
FICH
FICH
FICH

Vagabond

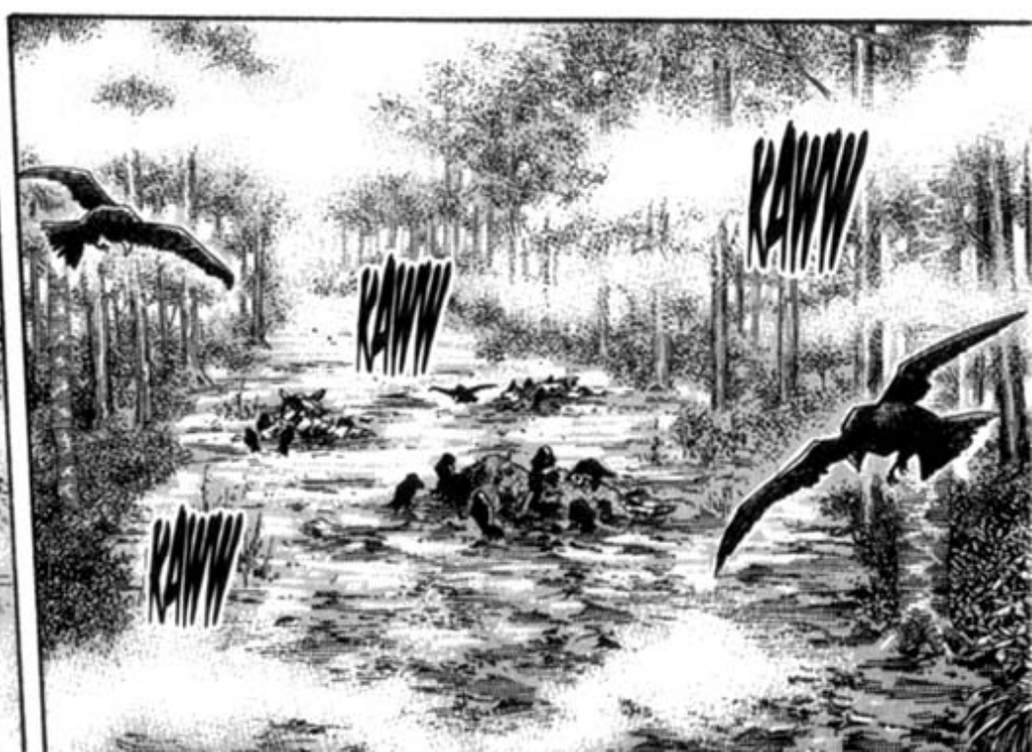

(...AMATEURS OUT TO KILL.)
(THESE MEN ARE SIMPLY...)
(...NOR ONE OF TECHNIQUE.)
(FOR THEM, IT'S NO TEST OF SKILL...)

#166 First Friend



KAWW

KAWW


KAWW
KAWW
KAWW
KAWW

GASP!
FWOOSH
GASP!
HUH ...?
FWUMP
!
HEY, YOU'RE STILL ALIVE.
WIPE YOUR FACE. IT'S COVERED WITH BLOOD.
FSHH
WHAT ABOUT KOJIRŌ ...?
.....
KAWW
KAWW
.....

.....

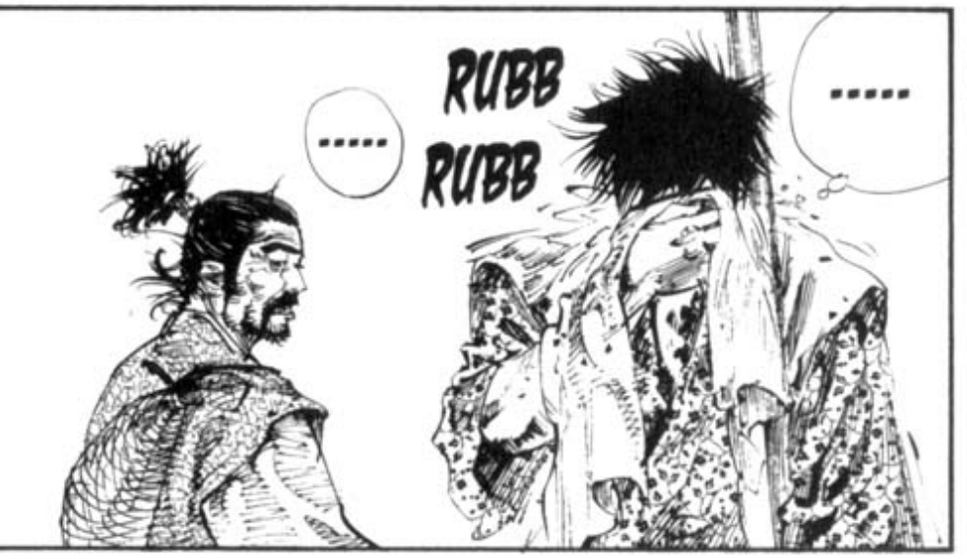
HM?
ARE YOU CRYING ?

I MANAGED TO SURVIVE BECAUSE I STAYED BY YOUR SIDE.
SENSEI ...
IF I WERE ON MY OWN, I'D BE DEAD.

KOJIRŌ WAS ALL BY HIMSELF...
KOJIRŌ WAS...

THEN COLD AND DRENCHED BY THE RAIN, HE WAS CHASED DOWN BY THOSE SAMURAI HUNTERS.
...HE FOUGHT THOSE ARMORED SOLDIERS ...
HE WAS EXHAUSTED FROM OUR LONG TRAVELS HERE TO SEKIGAHARA ...

HE HAD NO WATER, NO FOOD, AND NO SLEEP...
...WITHOUT EVEN UNDER-STANDING THE SITUATION, HE WAS HUNTED DOWN...

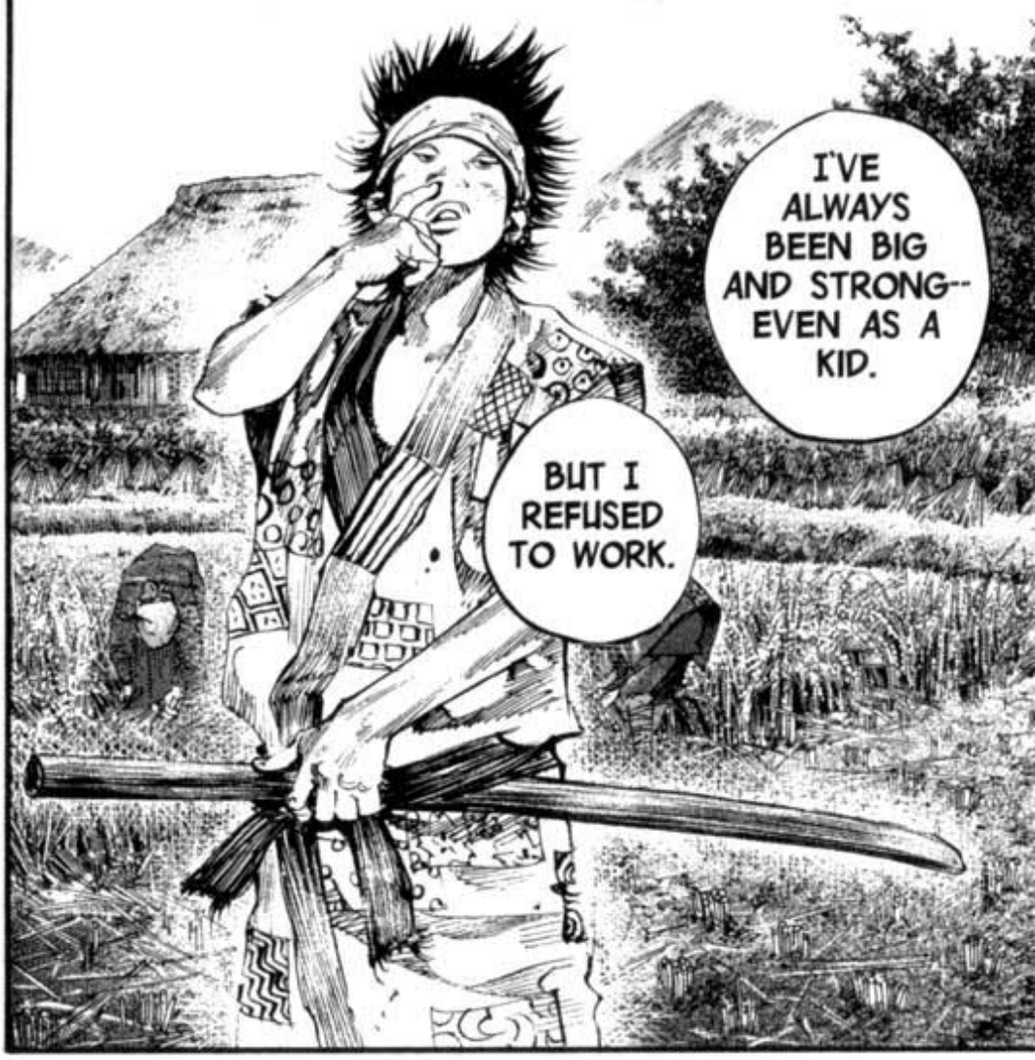

.....
RUBB
RUBB
.....

BELIEVE IT OR NOT, EVERYONE IN MY VILLAGE FEARED ME.

?

SENSEI...

I PLAYED AROUND AT TRAINING WITH THE SWORD AND ACTED LIKE A BULLY.
THE KIDS AND EVEN THE ADULTS WERE ALL TERRIFIED OF ME...


I'VE ALWAYS BEEN BIG AND STRONG-- EVEN AS A KID.
BUT I REFUSED TO WORK.

THEY ALL SHUNNED ME.
AND THEY...

I DIDN'T HAVE ANY FRIENDS.

I KNEW THAT.

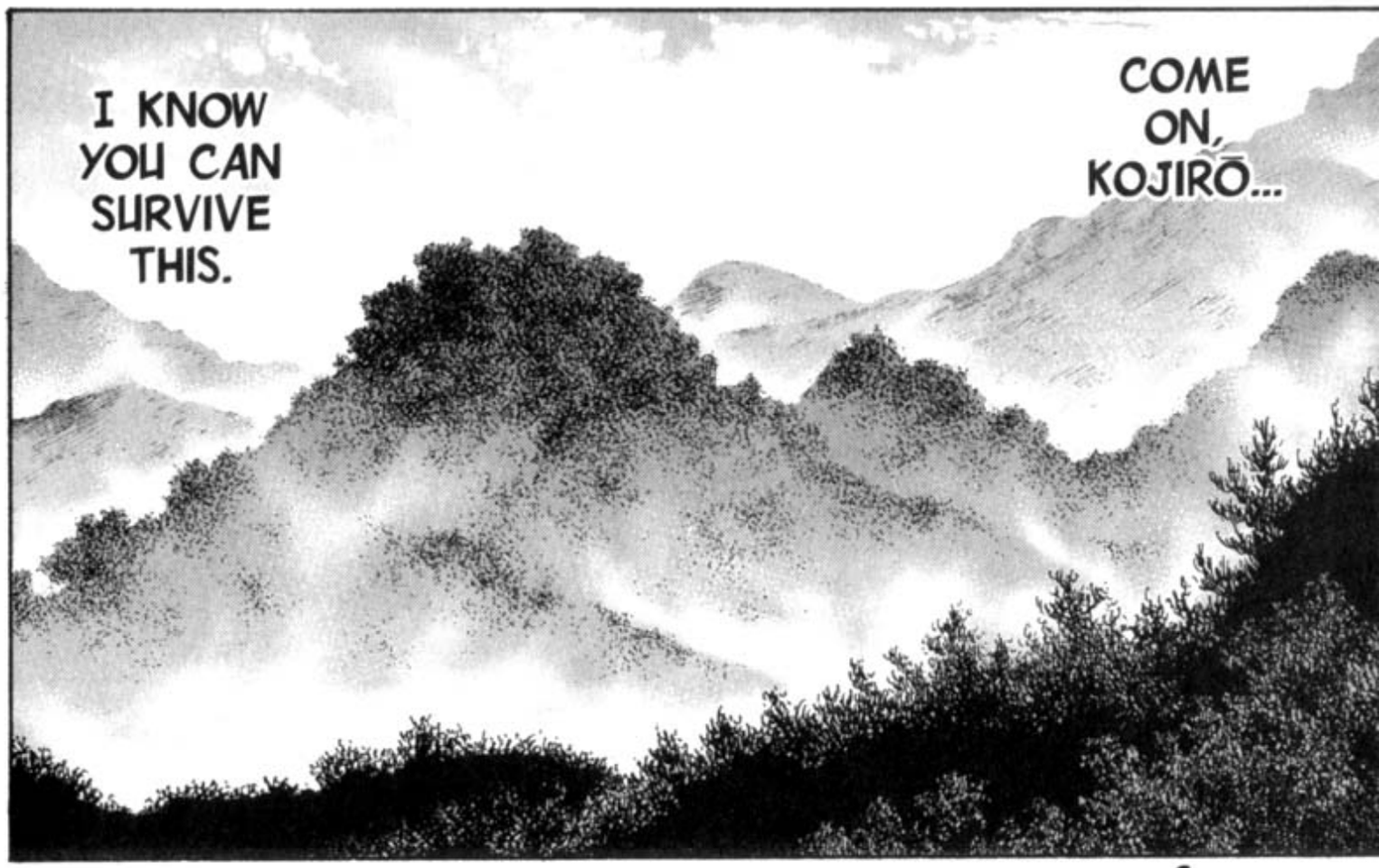
OF COURSE THEY DID.
YOU DIDN'T WORK, AND YOU WERE UP TO NO GOOD.

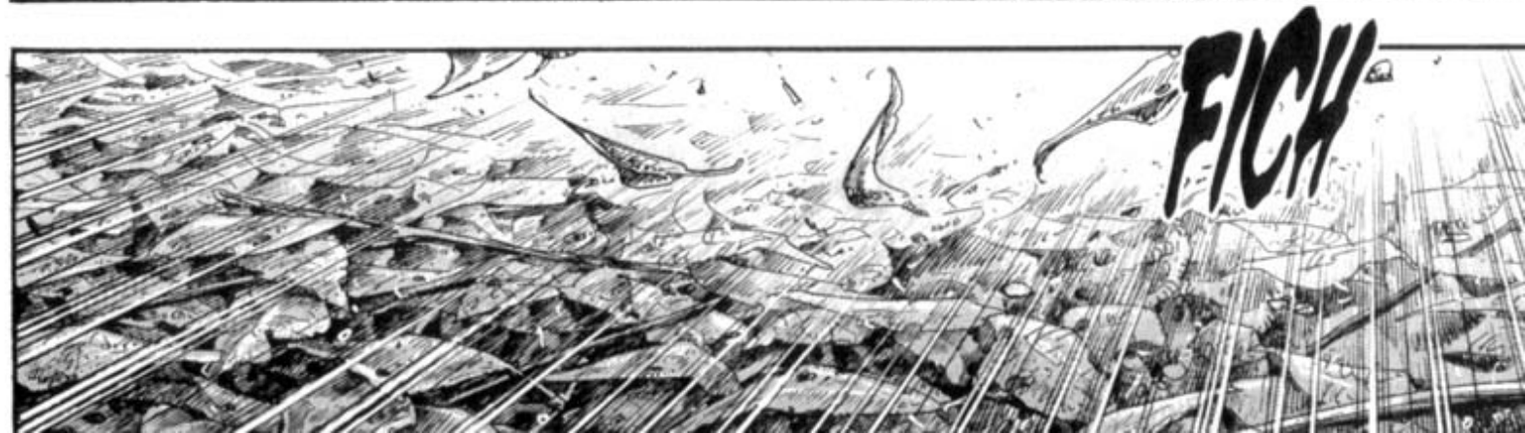
KOJIRŌ, YOU WERE MY FIRST FRIEND.
KOJIRŌ !!
WAHH!
I HOPE YOU'RE ALIVE!
PLISH PLISH
AHA!
TONK
OW!

I'M SO THIRSTY.
UMF...

GLUG
GLUG GLUG

FALLEN WARRIORS WON'T ALWAYS HAVE DRINKING WATER.
SO STOP THAT SOBBING. YOU'RE WASTING WATER.
I'M SORRY...


I KNOW YOU CAN SURVIVE THIS.
COME ON, KOJIRŌ...


FICH

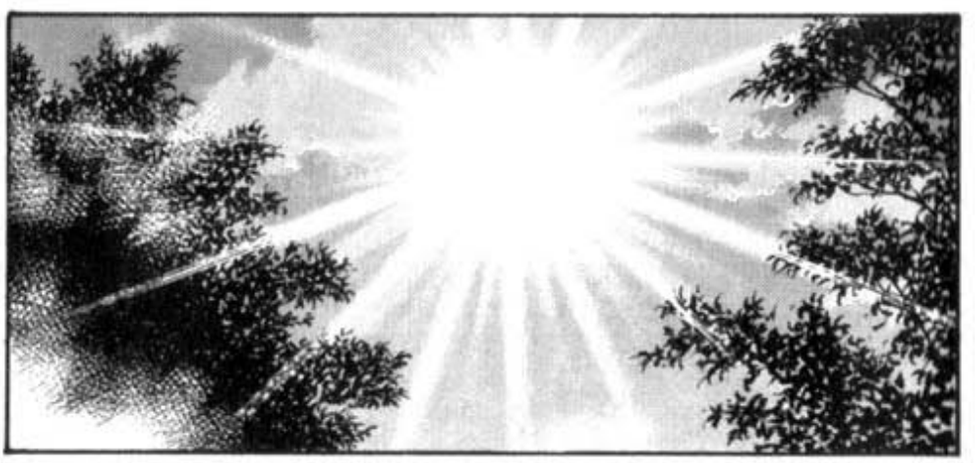
YAHH!!
HUF
HUF
HUF
FWOOSH

SLISH

WHAM
!

GASP!

UUH...



...

WH-
WHAT SHOULD WE DO?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN ?
SHIVER
SHIVER
MAYBE WE SHOULD RUN?

HUH?
HEY...
FWOM FWOM
.....
?!
IS HE DOZING OFF...?
THIS IS OUR CHANCE.

FCH
PLEASE DON'T OPEN YOUR EYES...
KEEP THEM SHUT.
HMM ...
HE REALLY IS ASLEEP.
FWOM

PLISSH
AHH...
THOK
ARGH
...
GASP
!!
.....

WE SHOULD HAVE RUN AWAY...
!!
WHUD
HUF
HUF
HUF
DUHH
HE STILL LOOKS DROWSY.
HE'S MOVING SO SLOWLY.
NOW'S MY CHANCE !!
HE'S NODDING OFF.

THWUNK

FWOM

ARF
ARF
ARF
ARF
THE DOGS ARE ONTO SOME-THING!
OVER HERE!

ARF
ARF

HUF
ARF
ARF
HUF

HUF
ARF
HUF
ARF
HUF

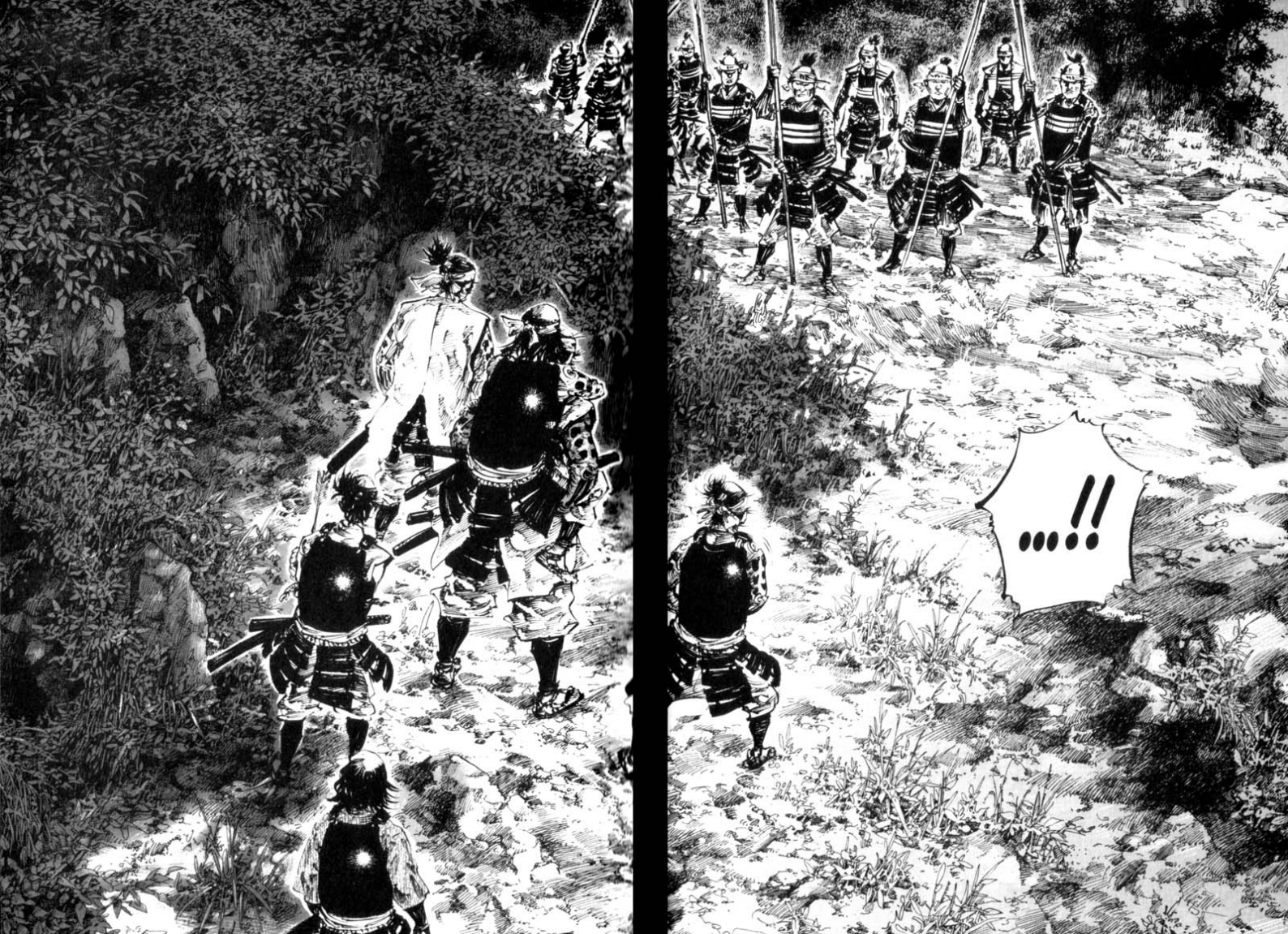
WE'VE CLIMBED PRETTY FAR.
HUF
HUF
TOSHIMUNE, IS OSAKA BEYOND THIS PEAK?

BUT WE'VE ALREADY WALKED SO FAR.

WE STILL HAVE A LONG WAYS TO GO, KOUN.
NO.
HUF
HUF
WHAT ?!

STOP COM-PLAINING AND WALK ON, KOUN.
I'M SURE OUR LORD MUST HAVE TAKEN THIS PATH TOO.
YOU FOOL. OSAKA ISN'T JUST THE NEXT VILLAGE OVER.

DAWN'S APPROACH-ING...
HUF
HUF
I'M SORRY, KOUN.
.....
HUF
HUF
LEAVE ME BEHIND...
KOUN, LET ME DOWN...
HUF HUF
YOU'LL EXHAUST YOURSELF ...
SHINJIRŌ...
.....
DON'T LET GO EVEN IF YOU DIE, YOU HEAR?



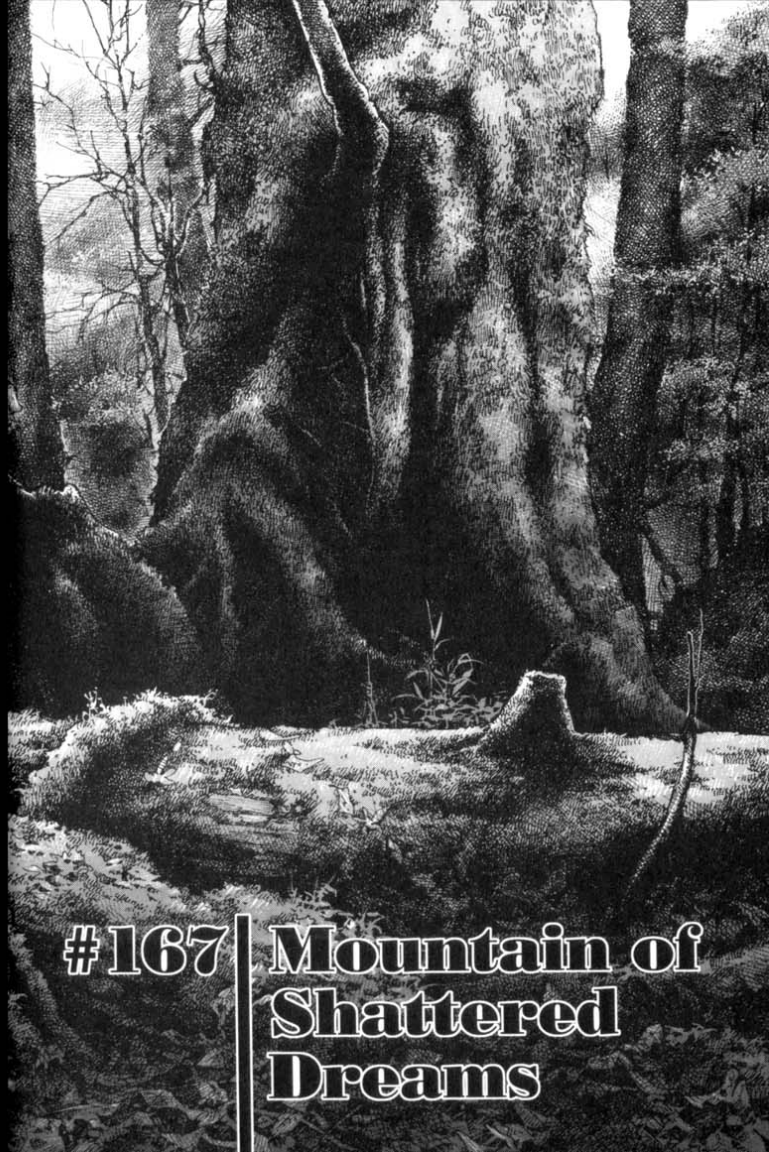
HOLD ON TIGHT. THINGS ARE GOING TO GET A BIT WILD.

WE *WILL* MAKE OUR WAY TO OUR LORD IN OSAKA...
...EVERY LAST ONE OF US!!

Vagabond

CAUTION
もうずいぶん
ねてない
危険
(DANGER! SLEEP
DEPRIVED MAN.)

.....
!!
!!
HOLD ON TIGHT, SHINJIRŌ.
THINGS ARE GOING TO GET A BIT WILD.



#167 Mountain of Shattered Dreams

HM...?
FSH

FICH

FICH
FICH
HEY THERE!
HOW'RE YOU FELLOWS DOING?!

FICH
FICH

SADAKORE ...

REFUGEES FROM THE WEST HAVE BEEN PUTTING UP QUITE A FIGHT.
WE SUFFERED SOME CASUALTIES.
HUH?
TUGG
FSH
HOLD ON. WHO THE HELL ARE YOU ?!

SLISH
ARGH
AHHH!!
!!
YOU BASTARD !!
UNGH ...
TUNK
!!

FICH
FICH
THESE GUYS...
FICH
THEY'RE FUGITIVES.
THEY'RE REFUGEES FROM THE WEST!!
FICH
FICH
FICH

THWK
GASP
!

SLISSH
!!
OOF
!!
THUNK
!!

KRAKK
YAHH!!
!!
KTHWAK

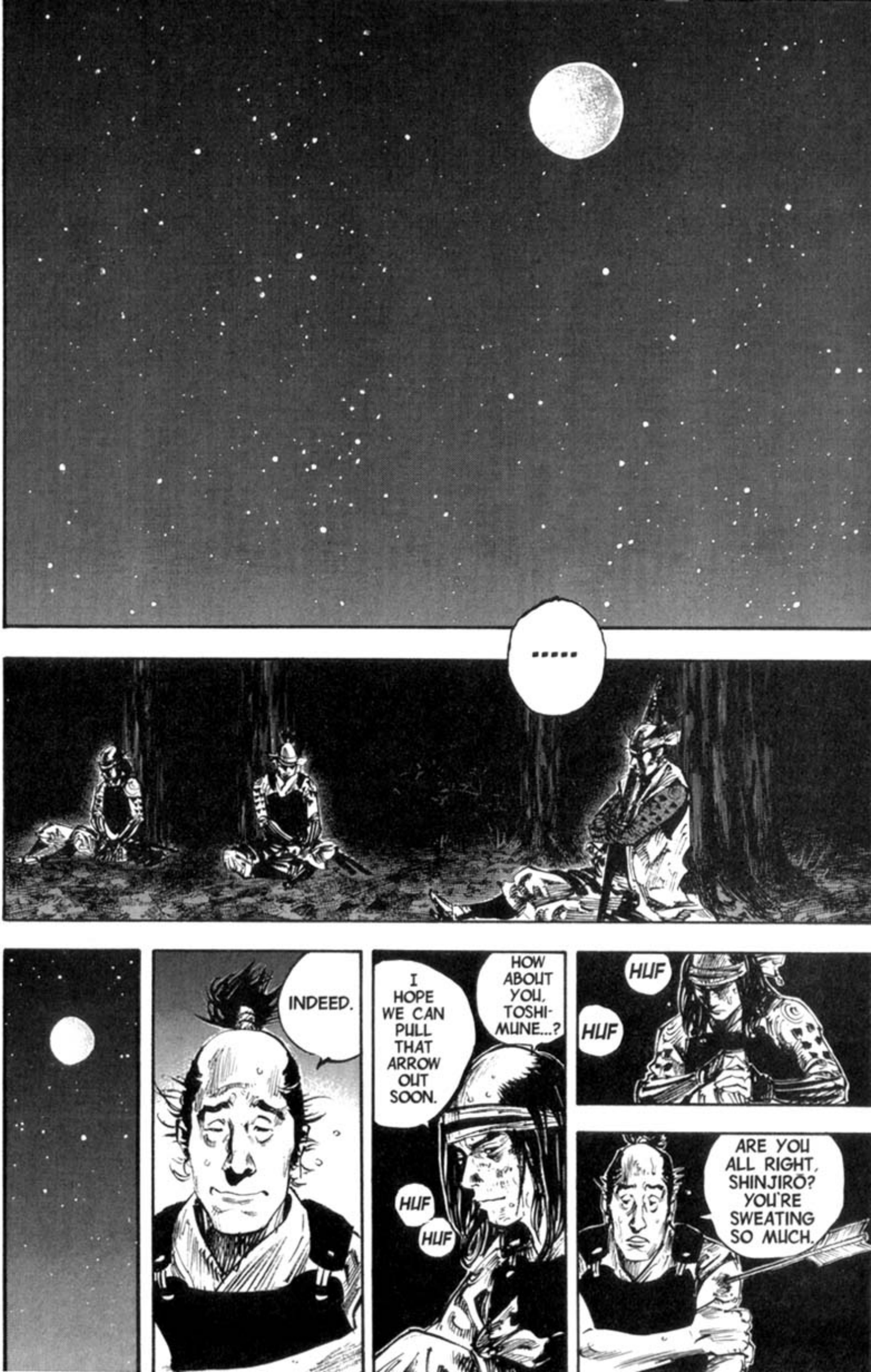
SPLICH
GASP ...
THESE MEN ARE FORMIDABLE !!
THEY'RE STRONG ...
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
...
HUF
HUF
RUN!
TMP

MNCH
MNCH
MNCH
MNCH

MNCH
MNCH
RUBB
RUBB
.....
GULP

HE...
GLUG GLUG
HE'S THE CAUSE OF ALL THIS...?
WHO IS HE?
.....
WE SHOULD RUN...
WE...

YES, RUN...
SKRCH
SKRCH
FWUM
AHHH!


.....
INDEED.
I HOPE WE CAN PULL THAT ARROW OUT SOON.
HOW ABOUT YOU, TOSHI-MUNE...?
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, SHINJIRŌ? YOU'RE SWEATING SO MUCH.

HAS OUR DREAM...
...BEEN SHATTERED ?

NO...
NOT YET.

KOUN AND I...

I DON'T UNDER-STAND HOW IT ALL WORKS.
BUT I'M CERTAIN OUR LORD WILL EVENTUALLY LEAD THIS COUNTRY.
I WILL SERVE HIM... AND MAKE A NAME FOR MYSELF.

...AND TOSHIMUNE WERE BORN AS FARMERS.

WE WERE DESTINED TO BE PEASANTS ALL OUR LIVES, BUT OUR LORD TOOK US IN.

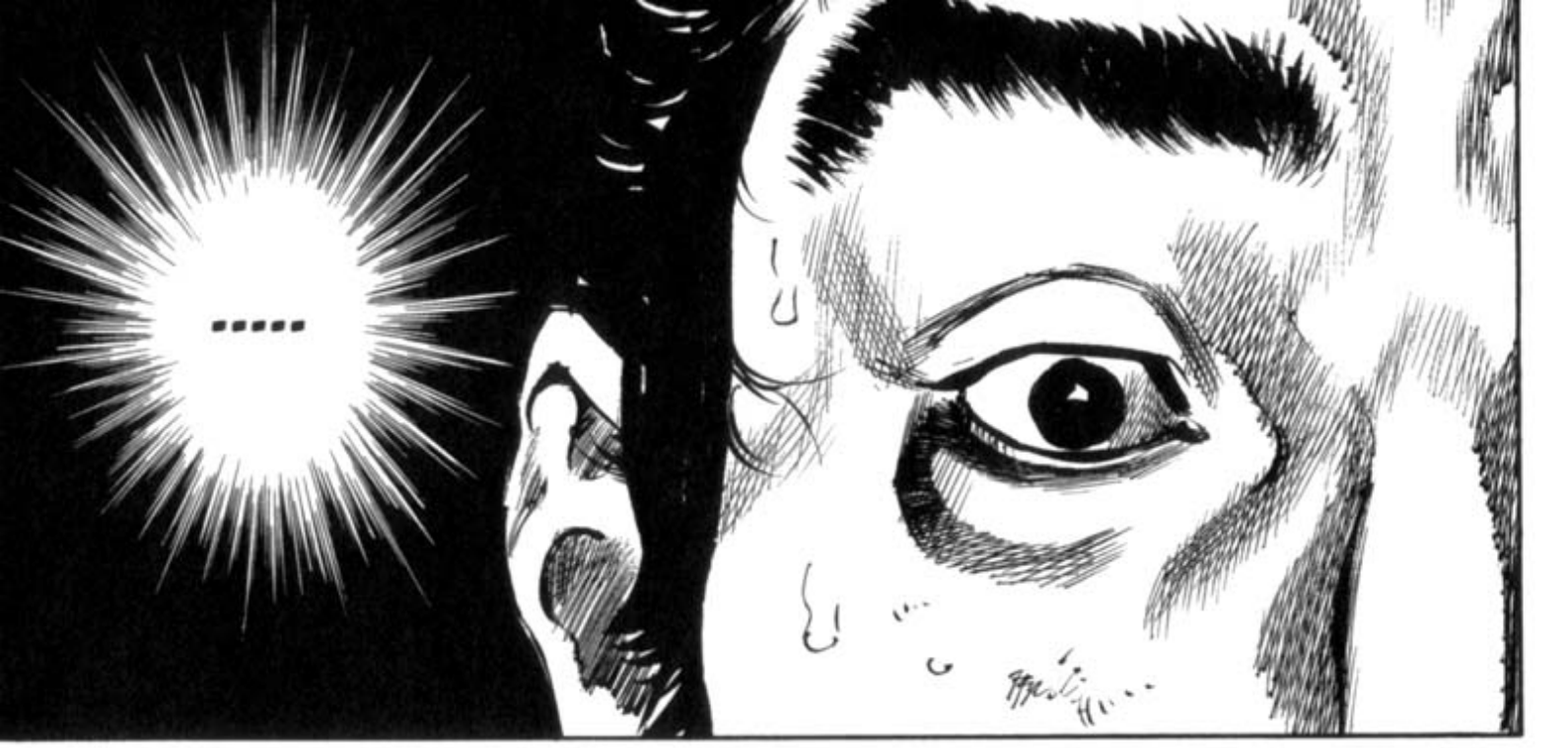
DESPITE OUR LOWLY ORIGINS...

...HE COMMENDED OUR SWORDSMANSHIP.

HE GAVE US A FUTURE.

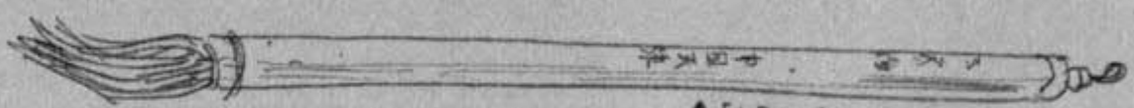
OUR LORD AWAITS US IN OSAKA...

WE'LL LEAVE IN AN HOUR.
FORTUN-ATELY, THE MOON IS OUT TONIGHT.
WE SHOULD PROCEED BEFORE DAWN THOUGH.
LET'S HAVE A LITTLE REST.
.....
...?
...?
.....



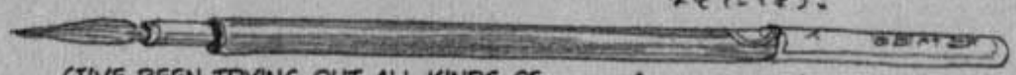
TUNK
AH

Vagabond



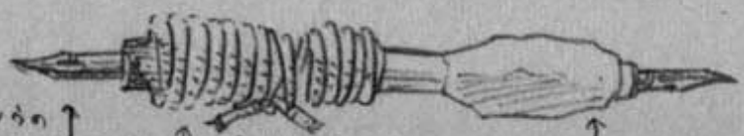
(BRUSH READS "CHUGOKU TENSHIN.")
(USED FOR THICK LINES AND CERTIFICATE LETTERING.)

↑「中国天津」とかいてある。
太く荒々しいタッチや賞賛
などに使う。



(I'VE BEEN TRYING OUT ALL KINDS OF BRUSHES, BUT I'VE SETTLED ON THIS ONE FOR NOW. "LARGE - KIKKA MENSO" SOLD AT SEKAIDO FOR ¥630. ALL THE CHARACTERS WERE DRAWN WITH THIS.)

↑いろいろ試してるが今のとこ
これにおちついてる。
「菊花面相 大」とかいてある。
世界堂のやつ。630円。
人物の点点はぜんぶこれ。



(A PLAIN G PEN) フツウのGペン

(SPONGE WRAPPING TIED WITH A HAIR BAND TO THICKEN THE GRIP.)

↑スポンジを巻いた上に髪をとめるゴムをまいて太くした。

↑ねりケシを盛って太くしてみたがやわらかくて使いづらいのでこっち側りは使わなくなった。

(I TRIED APPLYING CHUNKS OF KNEADED RUBBER ERASER ON THIS END, BUT IT WAS TOO SOFT TO GRIP SO I STOPPED USING THIS END.)

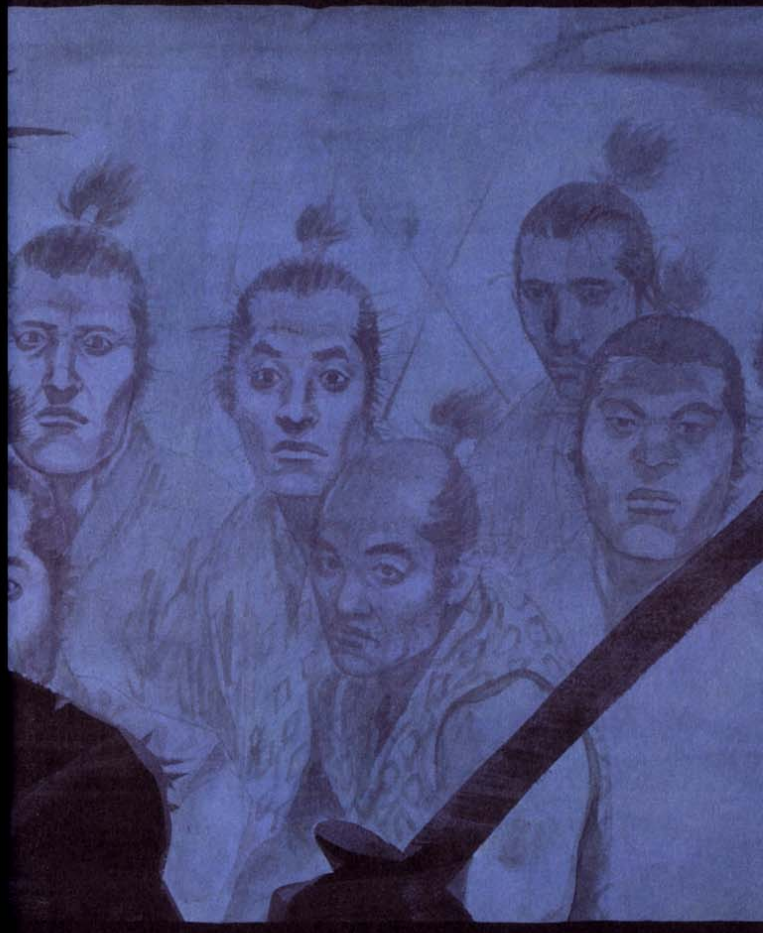
↑最近はバガボンドでは使わなくなった。

(I RECENTLY STOPPED USING THIS FOR VAGABOND.)

(KAIMEI LETTERING SOL)
(MY INK. STRONG BLACK.) ↗インクはコレ。黒が強い。

WHUD
?!
?!
....!!
.....

#168 Over the Mountain



DAMN...
DAMN IT!!
TOSHIMUNE !!
TOSHIMUNE ...

HM ...
UGEN! WAS THAT TOSHIMUNE ?!
WAS IT HIM?!
!
WHUMP

WHAT THE--?!
WHAT A BLUNDER...
THRAK
TOSHI-MUNE!
WE'RE SUR-ROUNDED!
COMPLETELY OUTNUMBERED !!

THIS MOONLIGHT IS TOO DIM...
NOR CAN WE TELL THEIR NUMBERS.
HUF
HUF
WE CANNOT SEE THE ENEMY...
HUF
IT APPEARS AS IF OUR OPPONENTS HAVE FORMED A CIRCLE AROUND US.
EVEN THE MIGHTIEST OF SWORDSMEN WOULD BE NO MATCH AGAINST SUCH AN ONSLAUGHT.
HUF
HUF
HUF

FLASH
...WHO COULD FIGHT HIS WAY THROUGH SOMETHING LIKE THIS...
...IS KOLIN.
THE ONLY FIGHTER I KNOW...
HUF
HUF
HUF
WHUD
THUNK
ARGH!
!!
WHUD

AHH!
KOUN'S SUCH A BEAST...
!!
I'VE ALWAYS AVOIDED SPARRING AGAINST HIM.
HUF
HUF HUF

ALL RIGHT, WE BROKE THEIR FORMATION !!
THEIR CIRCLE'S BROKEN !!
?!
!
PLIP
PLIP

THUNK

HE'S LOOKING MORE AND MORE LIKE OUR MOTHER.
HUF
MY BROTHER ICHIZO, FOUR YEARS MY JUNIOR...
HUF

THUNK
ARRGH!
UNGH!

...HE'S THE ONLY ONE WHO INHERITED THE WARRIOR'S BLOOD OF OUR FATHER.
HUF
HUF
BUT...

FICH
FICH
FICH
KILL!!
KILL THEM !!

STRANGELY ENOUGH, I DON'T ENVY HIM THIS.

I'M PROUD OF HIM.
HUF
HUF

FICH
!!
MOVE FORWARD! ADVANCE!
WE CAN'T BE HURT AS LONG AS WE'RE TO THE SIDE OF THESE BAMBOO SPEAR TIPS.
PLISSH
THEY'RE TOO CROWDED TOGETHER AND CRAMPED BY THE TREES TO SWING THEIR SPEARS AROUND.
SO WE KILL THEM OFF ONE BY ONE WITHIN CLOSE RANGE.
THEY RISK KILLING EACH OTHER.
THAT'S RIGHT, UGEN.

THEY OUTNUMBER US SO. WE'D BE IN TROUBLE IF THEY THREW DOWN THEIR SPEARS AND ATTACKED US WITH THEIR BARE HANDS.
BUT THESE PEASANTS DON'T HAVE MUCH FIGHTING EXPERIENCE.
THEY'LL CLING TO THEIR PRECIOUS WEAPONS EVEN AS THEY DIE.
WHUD
I'M OF PEASANT ORIGIN JUST LIKE YOU, SO I'LL TELL YOU THIS...
IF YOU RETREAT, WE WON'T CHASE AFTER YOU.
WHY SHOULD YOU ALL DIE FIGHTING ?
HUF
HUF
HUF
WHUMP

THERE'S NO GUARANTEE OF THAT...
BESIDES, OUR HEADS AREN'T WORTH MUCH.
!!
HUF
HUF
WE'LL ...
WE'LL BE REWARDED !!
OUR FARMS WON'T BE TAXED AS HEAVILY!

TOSHIMUNE ...!!

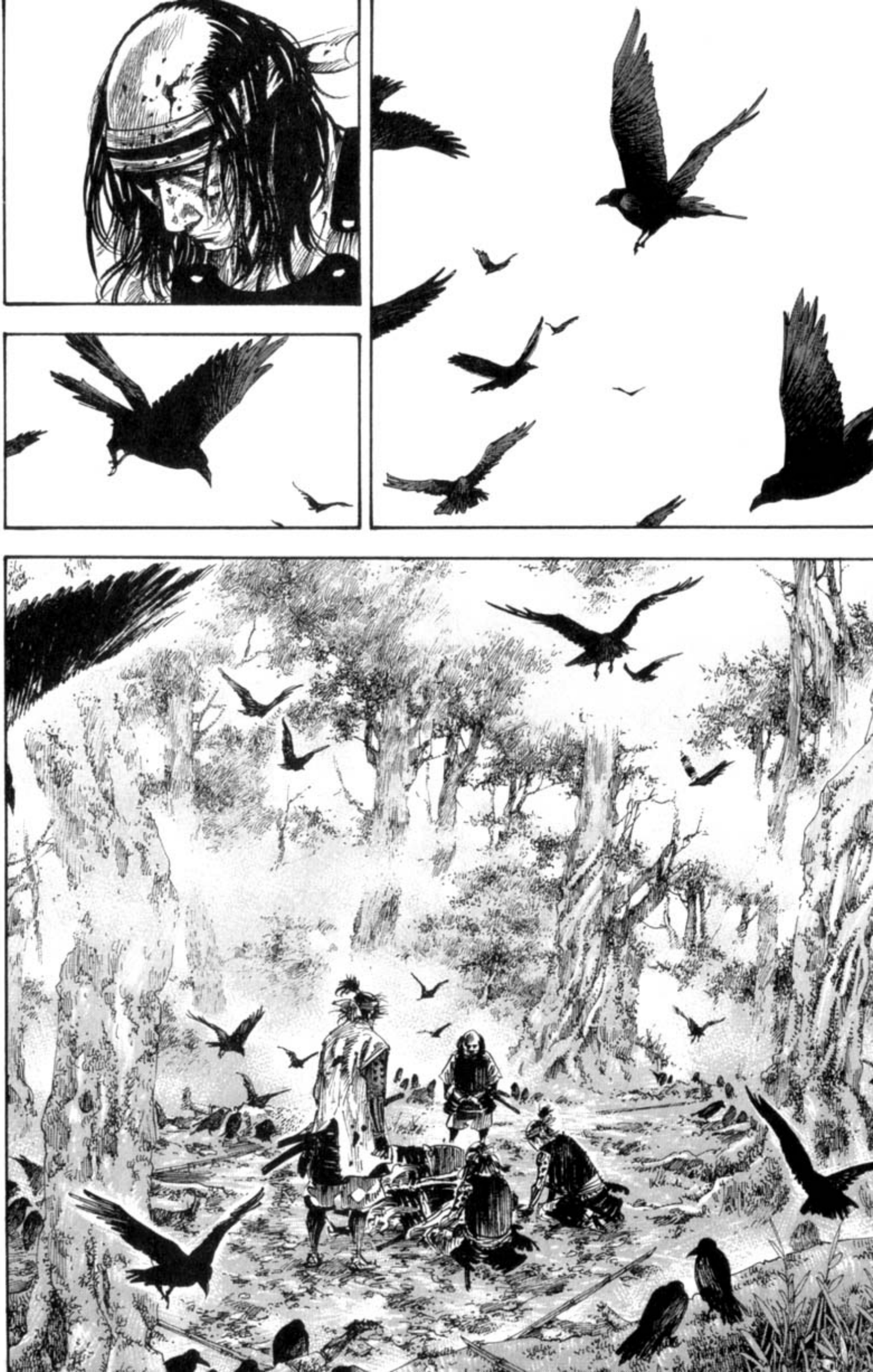
UGEN'S SWORDS-MANSHIP IS MORE RATIONAL. SOME MAY EVEN SAY ELEGANT.
HUF
HUF
HUF
KOUN'S SWORD IS MIGHTY... ALMOST DEMONIC. HE'S A NATURAL TALENT IN A DIFFERENT CLASS ALTOGETHER.
I ADMIRE UGEN'S SWORDSMAN-SHIP.
WHY NOT?
A SAMURAI ADMIRING A PEASANT'S SWORDSMAN-SHIP...

FWM
YOU ALIVE ?
UNGH !
TUGG
TUGG
FICH
HUF
FICH
HUF
.....
HUF
WHAT THE --?!
FICH FICH
HEY!
LET GO!

HELP...
TAKE THIS!
TUNK
!!
SHINJIRŌ, CAN YOU MOVE?!
UGEN !!
FSSH
UNGH

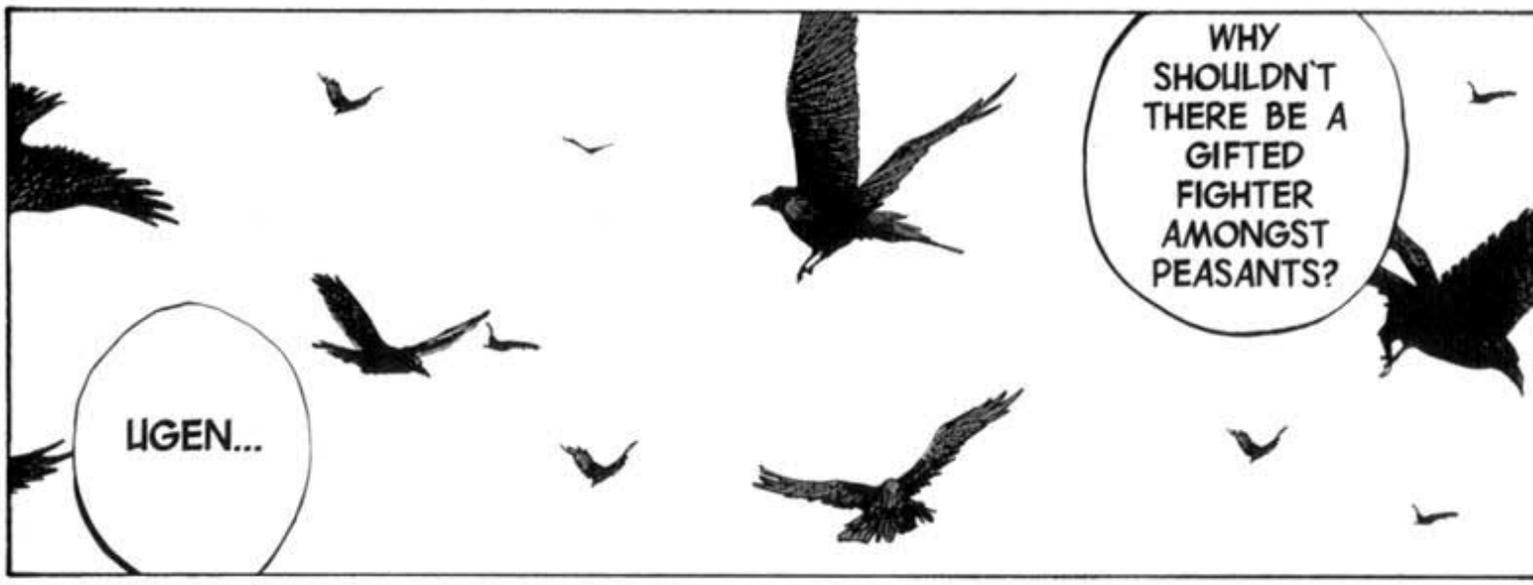
...?
THUNK
THUNK
THUNK
THUNK
THUNK
THUNK

IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN ME. I SHOULD BE DEAD.



PLIP
PLIP
PLIP
PLIP
PLIP
I'M SORRY I WASN'T ABLE TO REMOVE YOUR ARROW.
PLIP
PLIP
PLIP
PLIP
DRINK ALL YOU WANT.
TOSHIMUNE ...
UGEN...

.....


WHY SHOULDN'T THERE BE A GIFTED FIGHTER AMONGST PEASANTS?
UGEN...

YOU WOULD HAVE MADE A NAME FOR YOURSELF.

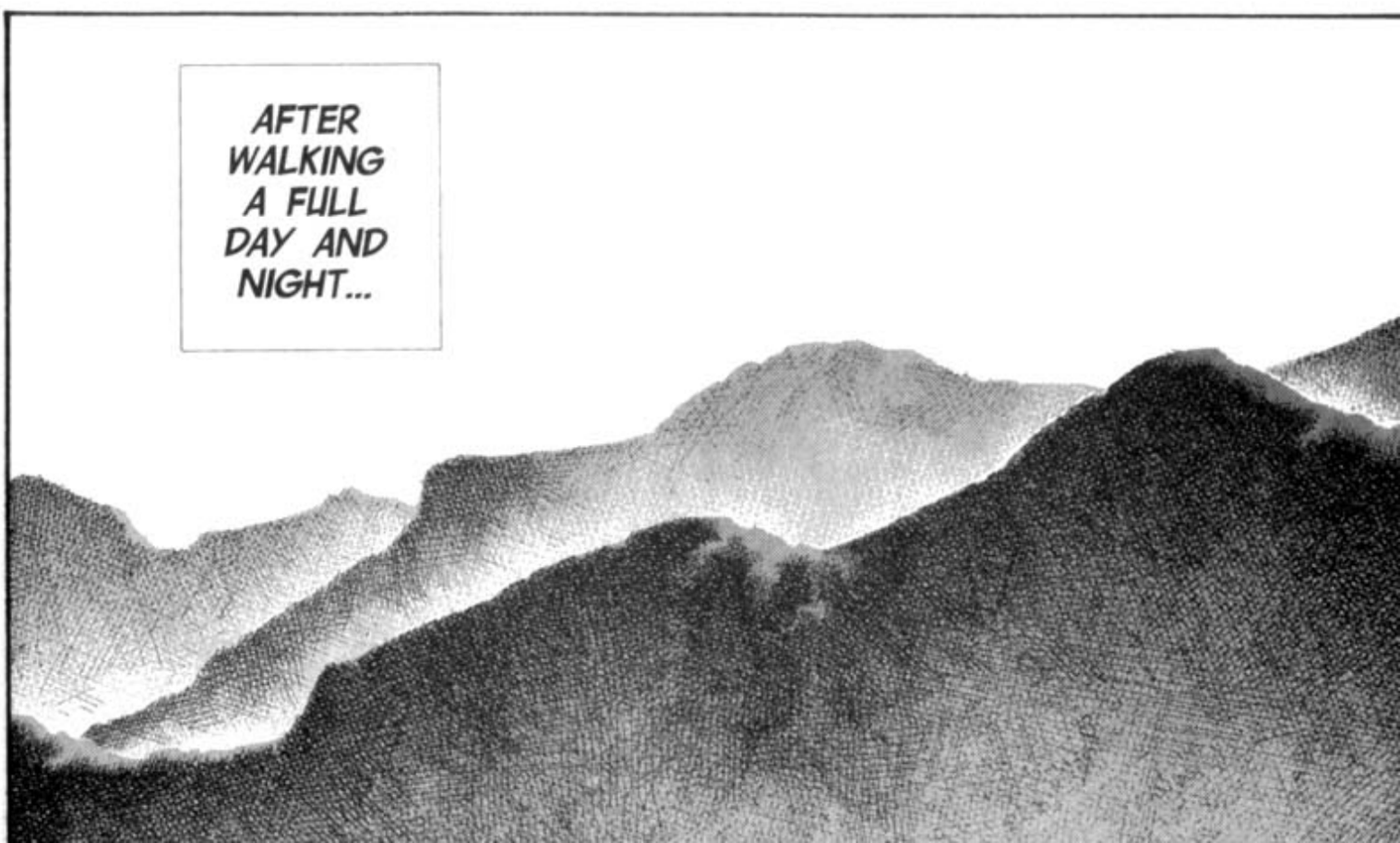
.....
.....
WE'RE SHEDDING OUR ARMOR.
WE'LL DRESS AS PEASANTS ...
...SO NO ONE CAN TELL WE'RE REFUGEE SOLDIERS.
TAKE THEIR CLOTHES ...
UNDER-STOOD ?
WE'RE GOING TO SURVIVE NO MATTER WHAT IT TAKES.
AND OUR SWORDS ?

WE CAN'T LEAVE THEM BEHIND, NOW CAN WE?

.....

.....

LET'S GO, SHIN-JIRŌ.


AFTER WALKING A FULL DAY AND NIGHT...

FICH
HUF
FICH
HUF
FICH
HUF
HUF
HUF
...!!
FICH
FICH
ONCE WE'RE BEYOND IT WE'LL REACH OUR LORD...!!
THE PEAK ...!!

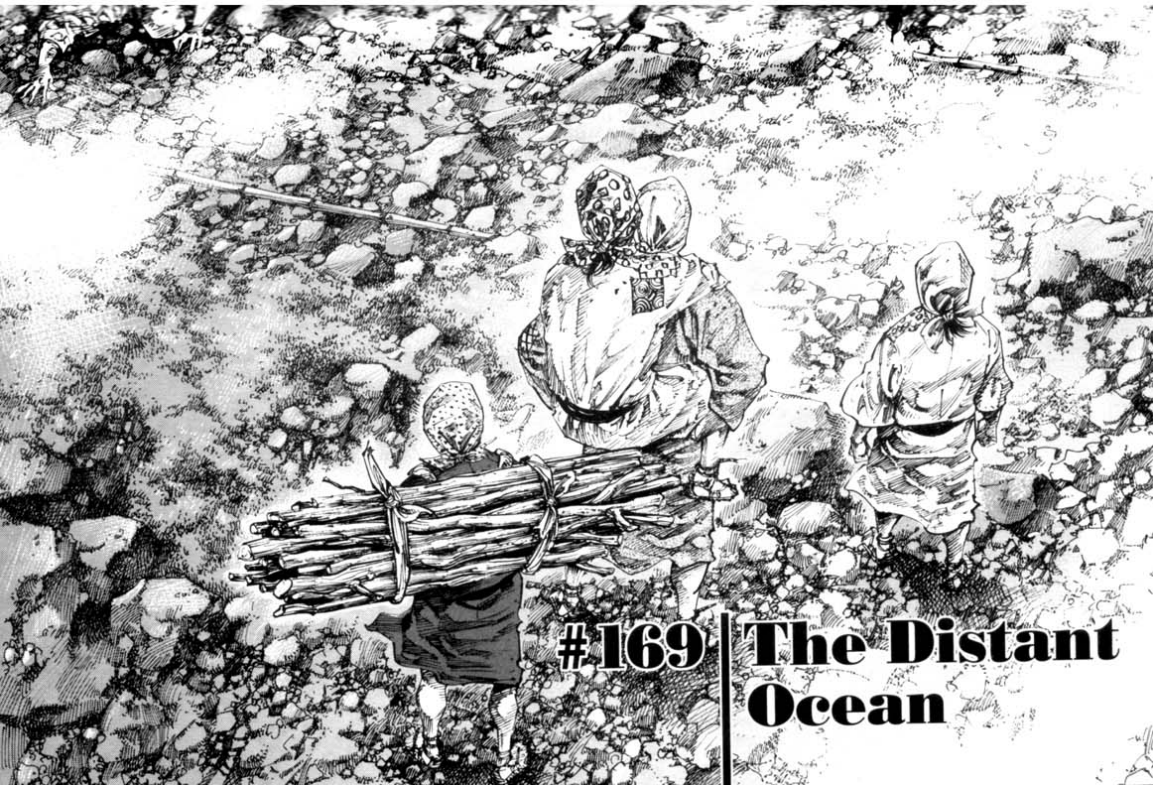
FWIP
FWIP
FWIP

Vagabond

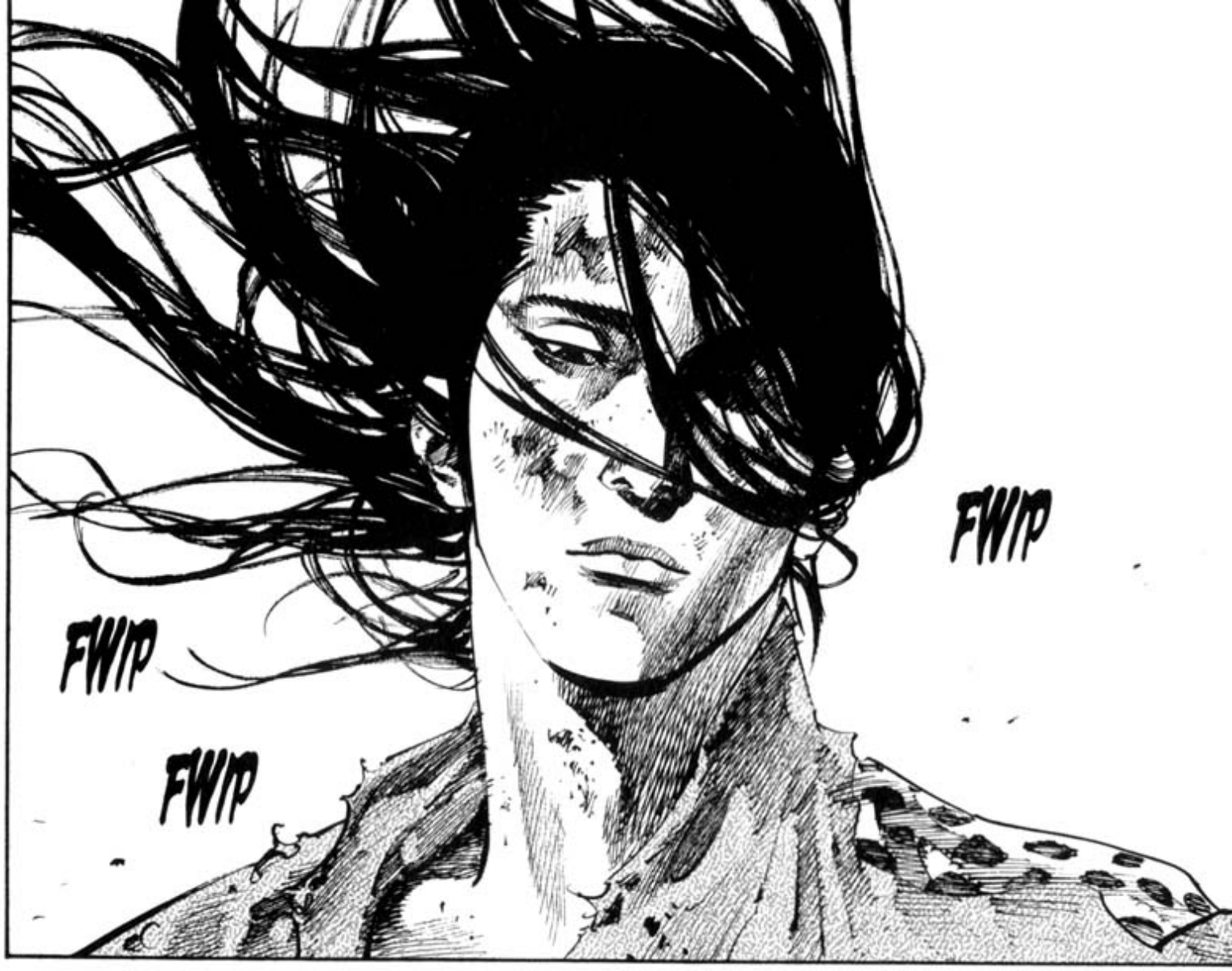
CAUTION!
(DO NOT APPROACH WITH FOOD OR WATER. IT WILL BE TAKEN.)
・食い物と水とを持って近づくべからず。とられます。
DANGER
・脳内麻薬まみれ
(BRAIN FLOODED WITH DRUGS.)

HUF
HUF
HUF
A HOUSE ...!!

I WONDER IF THEY'LL GIVE US SOME WATER AND FOOD...
AND IT'D BE NICE TO SPEND THE NIGHT UNDER A ROOF ...!!
I WONDER HOW KOJIRŌ IS...
HUF
HUF
WE'LL MEET AGAIN, RIGHT...?



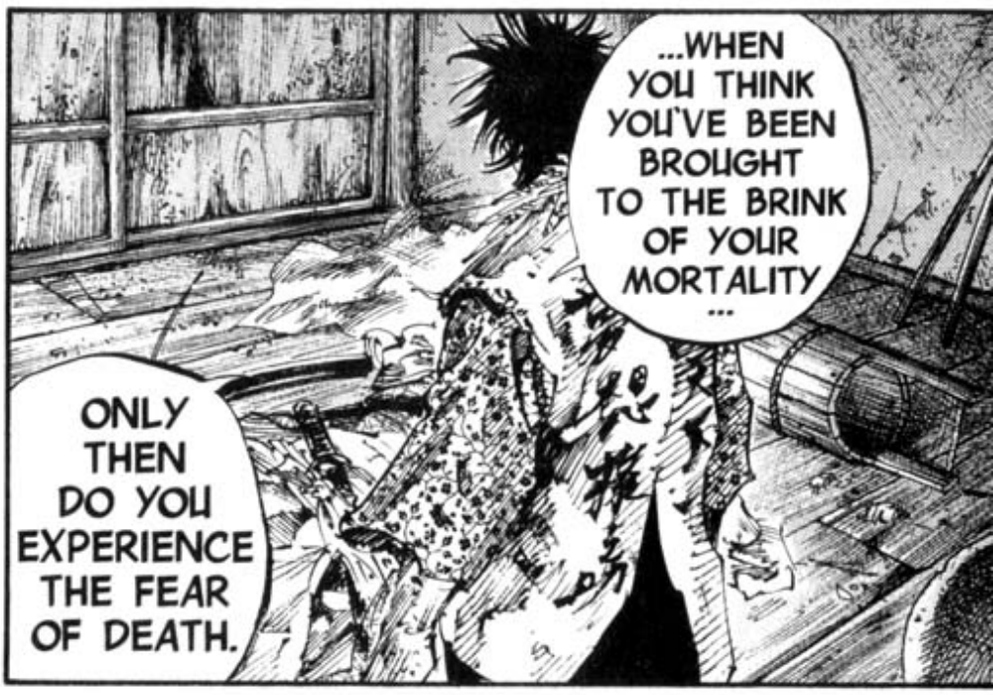
#169 The Distant Ocean


FWIP
FWIP
FWIP

IT'S BEEN RANSACKED ...
NOBODY'S HERE...
MOST OF THE FOOD'S BEEN EATEN UP...
DAMN ...
IF KOJIRŌ'S STILL ALIVE...
...I'M SURE HE HAD TO FIGHT FOR HIS LIFE...
...SURROUNDED BY HOARDS OF THOSE REFUGEE HUNTERS ARMED WITH SPEARS.

IT'S ONLY WHEN A SPEAR TEARS OPEN YOUR STOMACH...
...OR WHEN YOU'RE TOO EXHAUSTED TO RUN...

IT'S A BEAST'S INSTINCT TO STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL.


...WHEN YOU THINK YOU'VE BEEN BROUGHT TO THE BRINK OF YOUR MORTALITY ...
ONLY THEN DO YOU EXPERIENCE THE FEAR OF DEATH.

HUF
HUF
HUF

YOU LEARN TRUE FEAR ONLY WHEN YOUR LIFE IS ON THE EDGE.

HE MUST HAVE BEEN HUNTED DOWN LIKE US.
HE ISN'T REALLY OUR ENEMY... BUT...
HE'S COMPLETELY EXHAUSTED.
HAKK
PLISH PLISH
HUF
HUF
HE PROBABLY THINKS WE'RE NO DIFFERENT FROM THOSE THAT TRIED TO KILL HIM EARLIER.
THESE CORPSES.
AND IN OUR CURRENT GUISE.

DID YOU DRINK SOME WATER FROM A WELL?
HUF
HUF
HUF
PLISH
HAKK
HUF
HUF

A SMALL ACT OF REVENGE FOR THEIR LAND RAVAGED BY WAR.
THE PEASANTS DEFECATE IN THEIR WELLS TO CONTAMINATE THE WATER SO THAT ANY INVADERS DRINKING FROM IT WILL FALL ILL.
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
GII...

GII-AI.

HM?

GII-AI...

...?

GRB

FWIP
FWIP
FWIP

GII-AI.

GII-AI...

AHH...
AIEEE...
AIEEE ...
AHH ...
.....
HE'S CRYING.

WHAT ABOUT YOU, SADAKORE ?
WHAT ?
I WANT TO TALK TO THIS FELLOW.

YOU ALL GO ON AHEAD.

!!

BUT WHY?
WE COULD ALL...
I EXPLAINED LAST NIGHT!

I'LL CATCH UP. GO NOW.
MAKE HASTE TO BE REUNITED WITH OUR LORD.

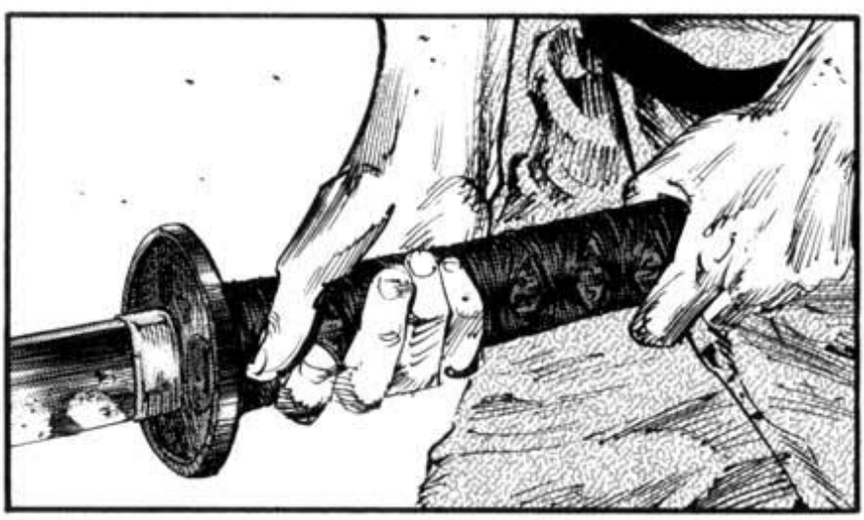
WE MADE A DECISION LAST NIGHT.

AIEE ...

ON TO OSAKA ...
FWOOOSH!

ARE YOU RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL THESE CORPSES?
PERHAPS I ASK THE OBVIOUS...

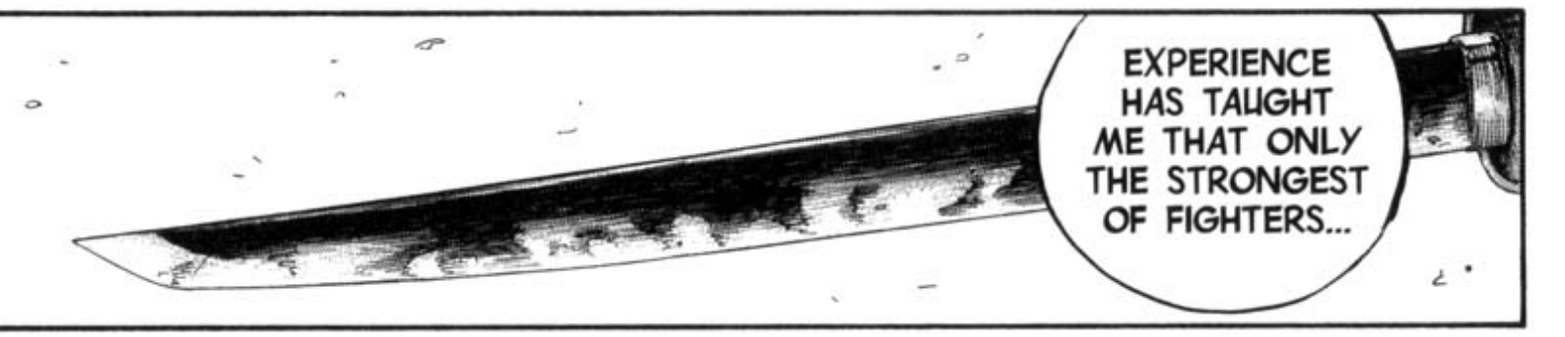
.....
LIKE US, YOU LOOK LIKE YOU'RE ABOUT TO COLLAPSE FROM EXHAUSTION ...



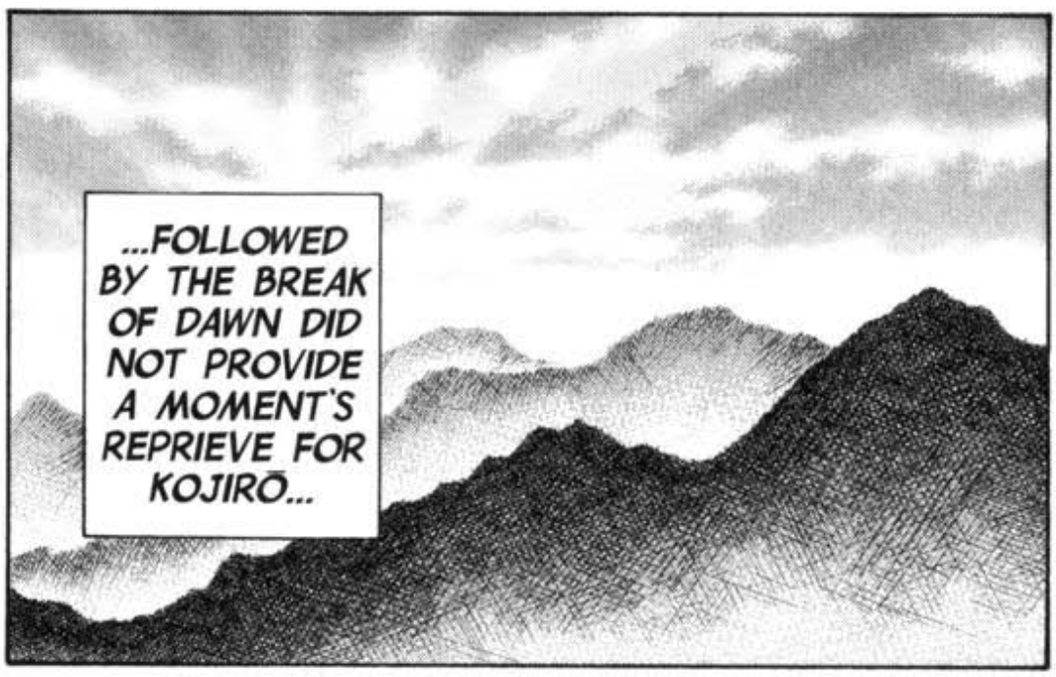
.....

BUT YOUR SPIRIT IS NOT BROKEN...

AS IF YOU'RE TERRIFIED...
EVEN THOUGH I'M UNARMED YOU STILL REMAIN ON GUARD.


EXPERIENCE HAS TAUGHT ME THAT ONLY THE STRONGEST OF FIGHTERS...

...DISPLAY SUCH FRIGHT.

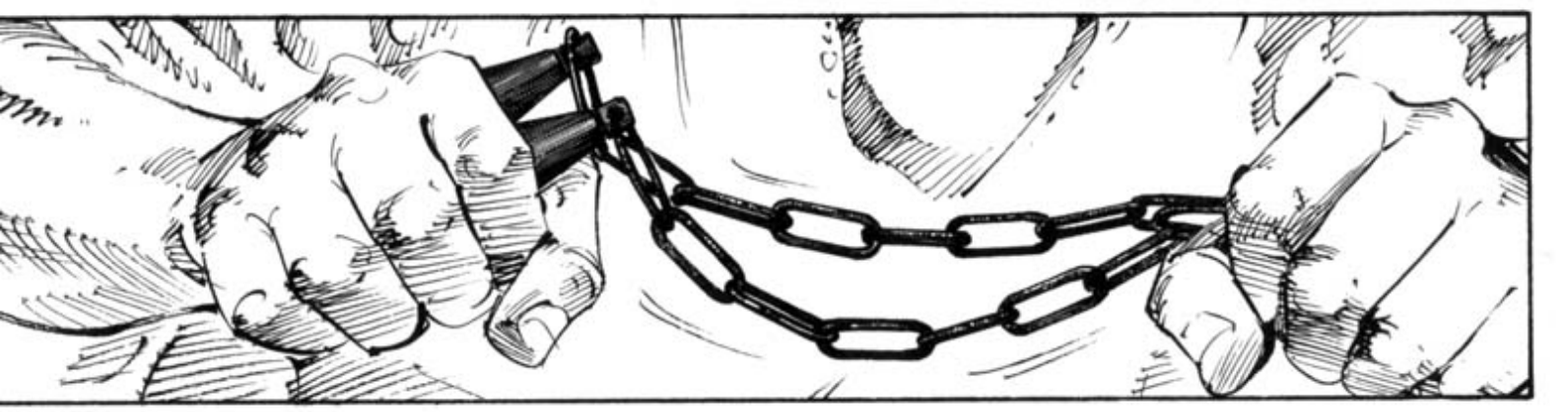

...FOLLOWED BY THE BREAK OF DAWN DID NOT PROVIDE A MOMENT'S REPRIEVE FOR KOJIRŌ...

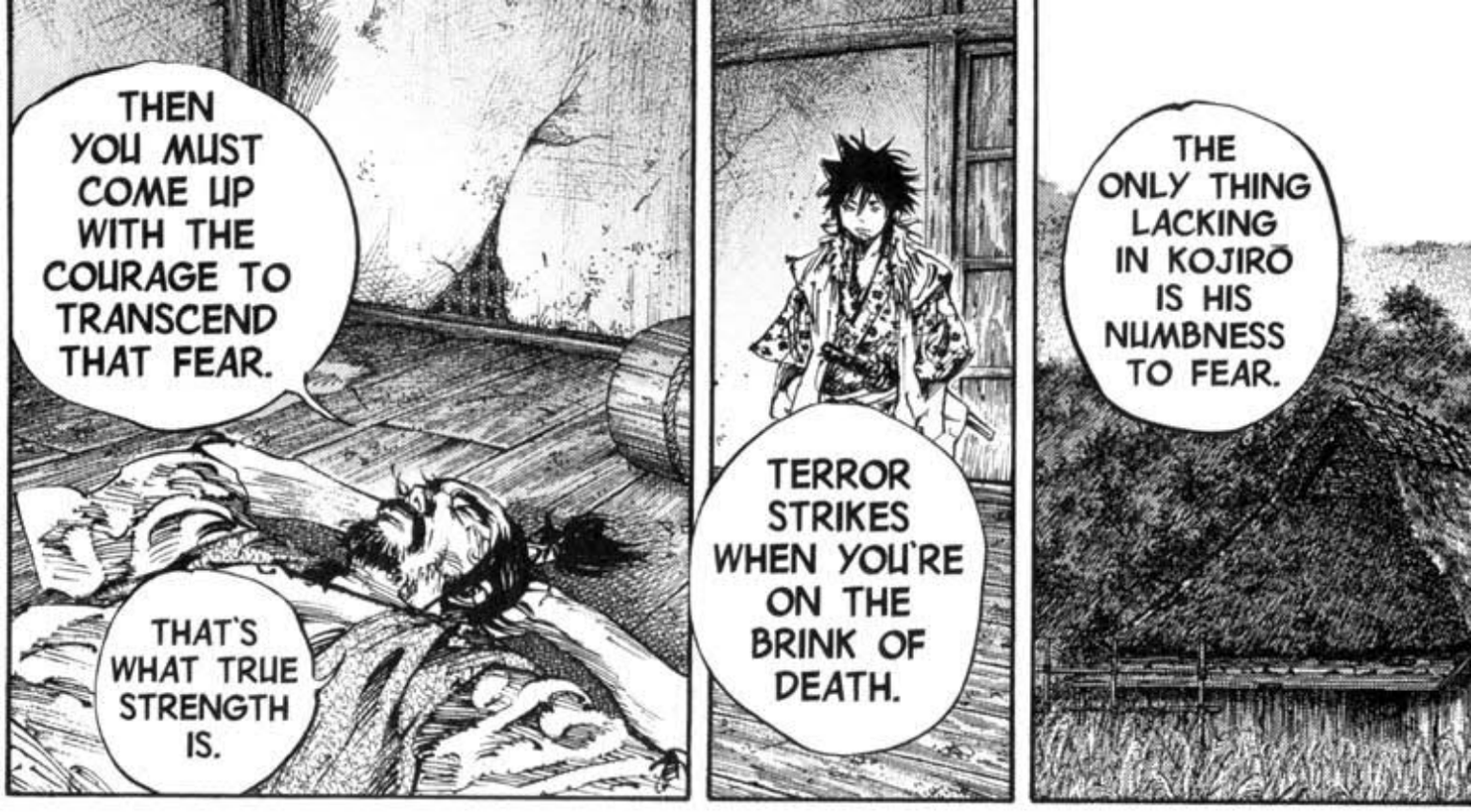
THE MOONLIT NIGHT...

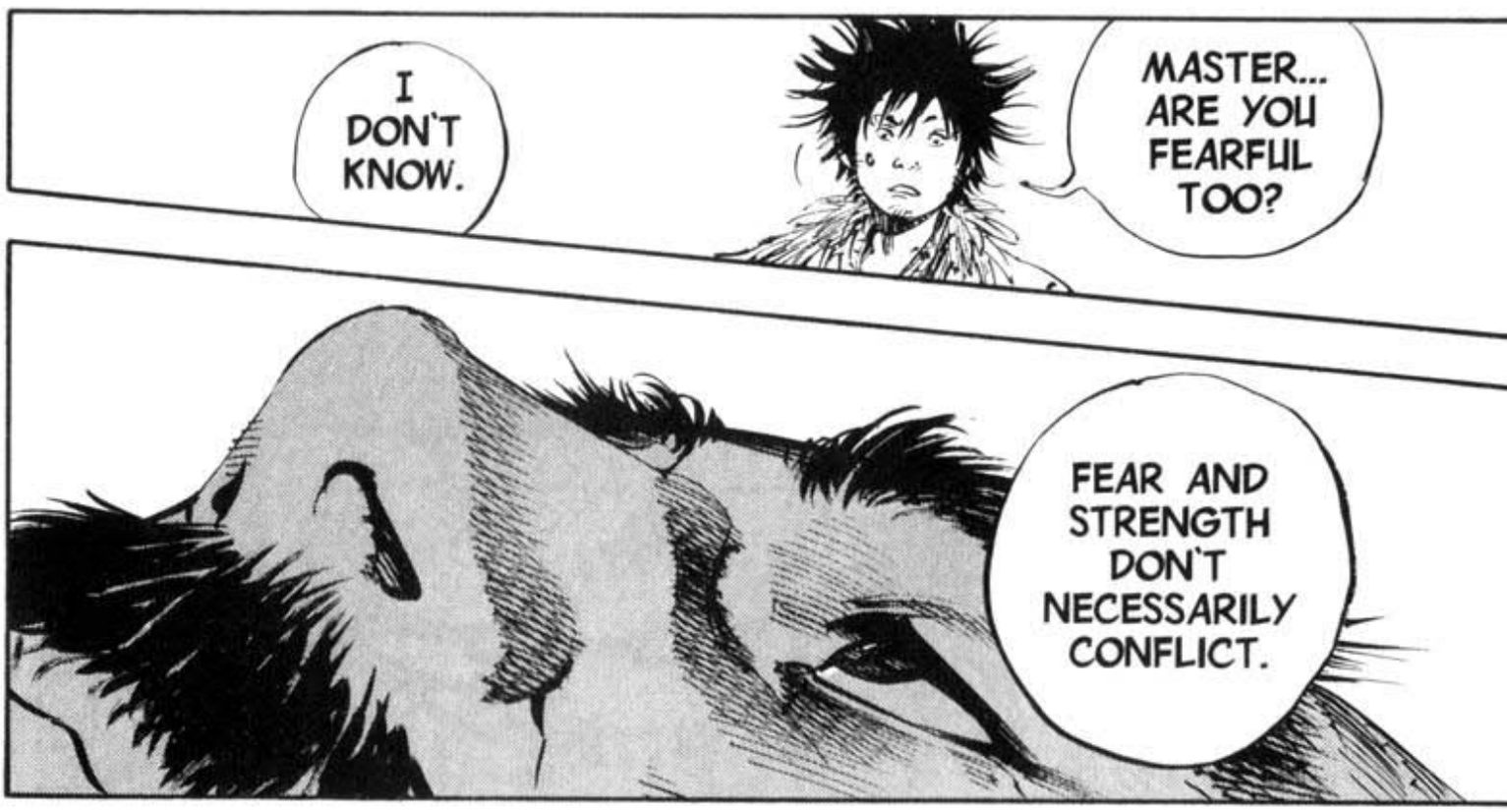
HORDES OF HUNTERS ...
UNRELENTING AND OUT TO KILL...

OUT HERE DEEP IN THE MOUNTAINS...

KOJIRO FINALLY CAME TO KNOW THE NATURE OF TRUE FEAR.




THEN YOU MUST COME UP WITH THE COURAGE TO TRANSCEND THAT FEAR.
THAT'S WHAT TRUE STRENGTH IS.
TERROR STRIKES WHEN YOU'RE ON THE BRINK OF DEATH.
THE ONLY THING LACKING IN KOJIRŌ IS HIS NUMBNESS TO FEAR.


I DON'T KNOW.
MASTER... ARE YOU FEARFUL TOO?
FEAR AND STRENGTH DON'T NECESSARILY CONFLICT.

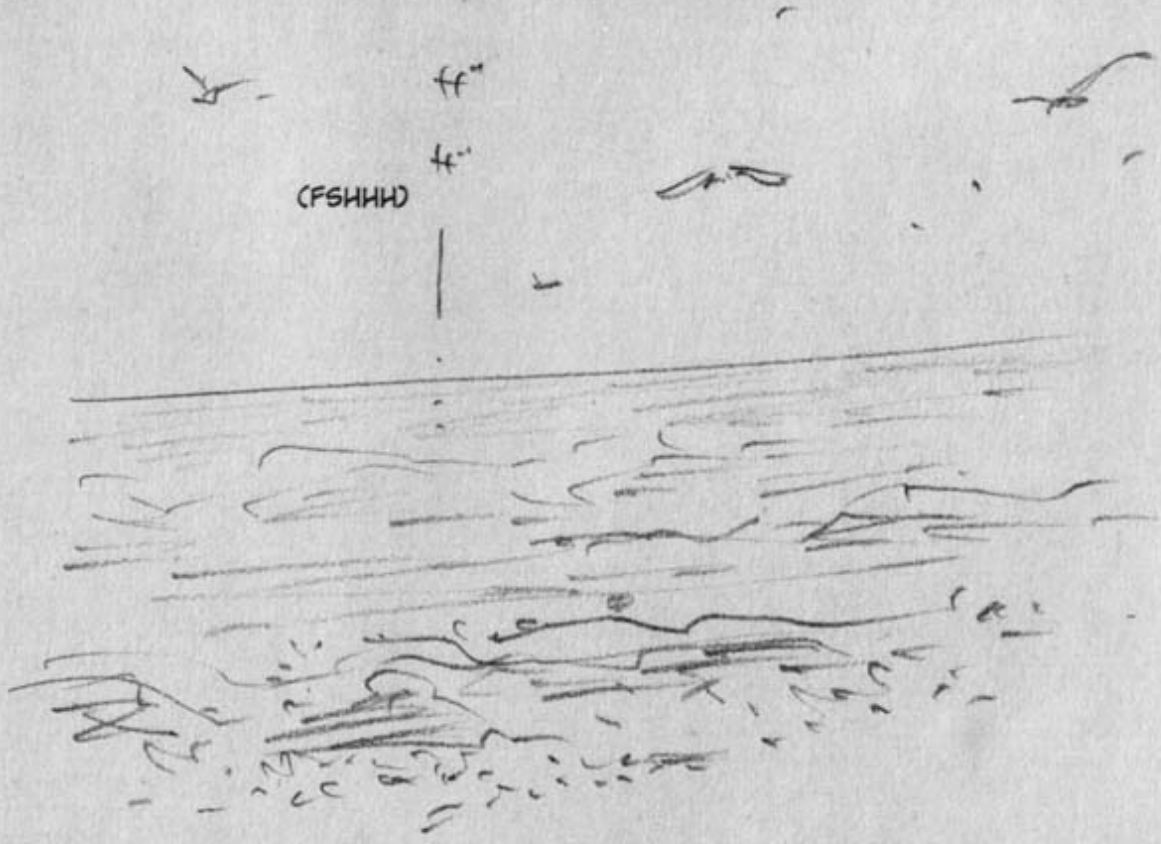
HSOOF

FICH
FICH
FWOOSH

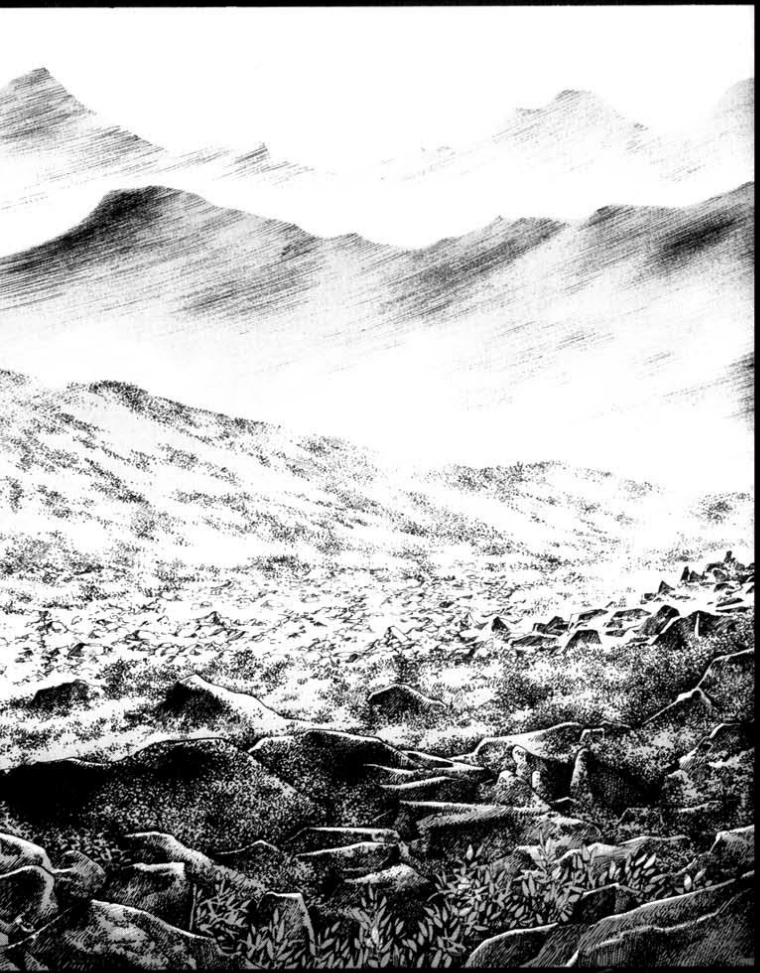
TUNK

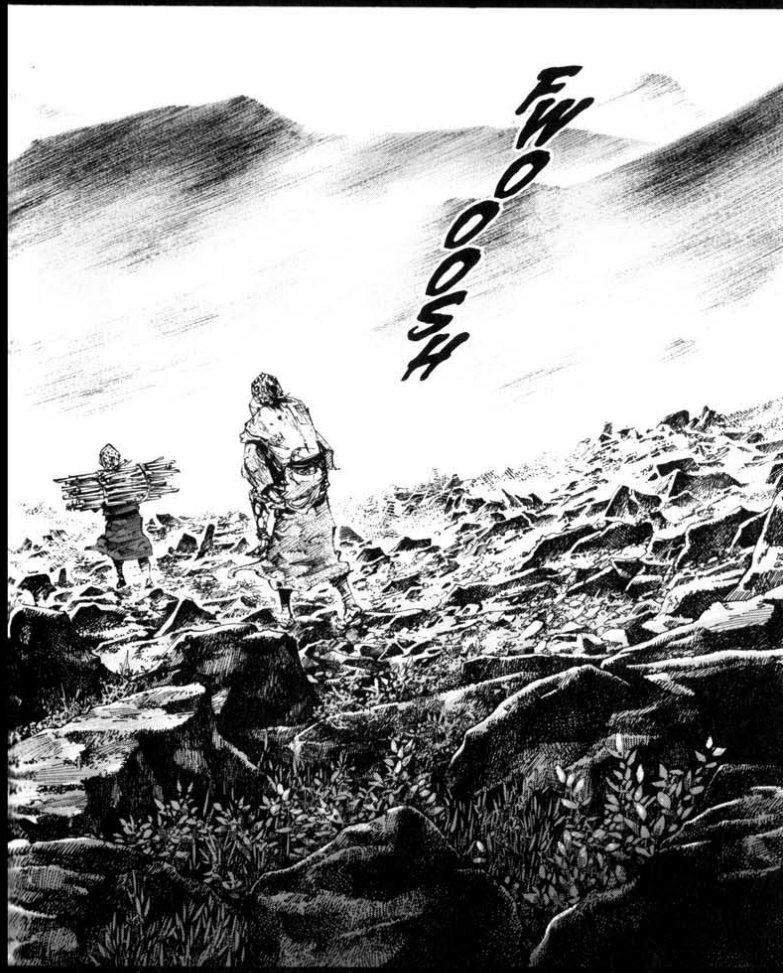
THE MOUNTAINS PROVIDED KOJIRŌ WITH WHAT WAS MISSING IN HIM.

Vagabond


(FSHHH)

FICH
YOU'RE BIG...
FWOOOOSH
KLAKK

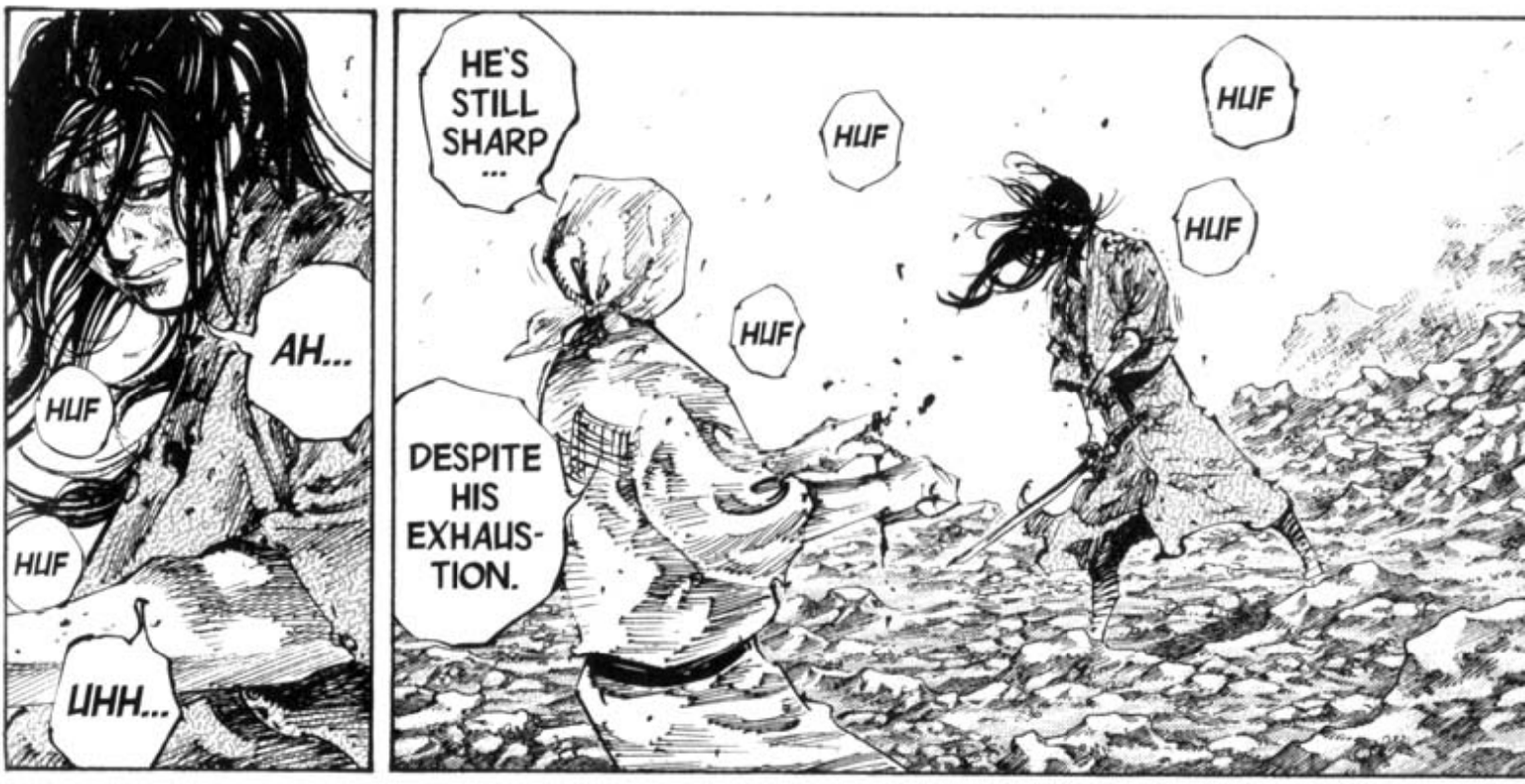



FWOOOSH

KLNK
THWUNK

TUNK
!
SLSH

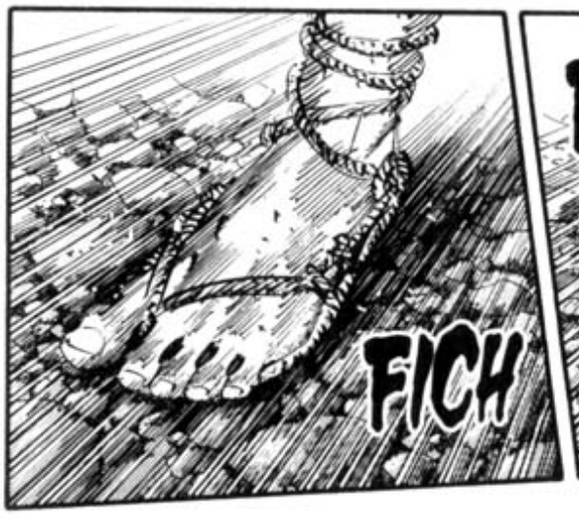
HMM
...
KLNK


HUF
UHH...
AH...
HE'S STILL SHARP ...
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
DESPITE HIS EXHAUS-TION.

...COULD WE HAVE AVOIDED THIS CONFRONTA-TION?
IF WE'D IGNORED EACH OTHER...

AS A VETERAN WARRIOR, MY INSTINCTS TELL ME...
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
I DON'T THINK SO...
NO...
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
FWOOOSH

THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT YOU THAT I JUST CAN'T IGNORE.


FICH

FICH

SOME-
THING
ABOUT
YOU.

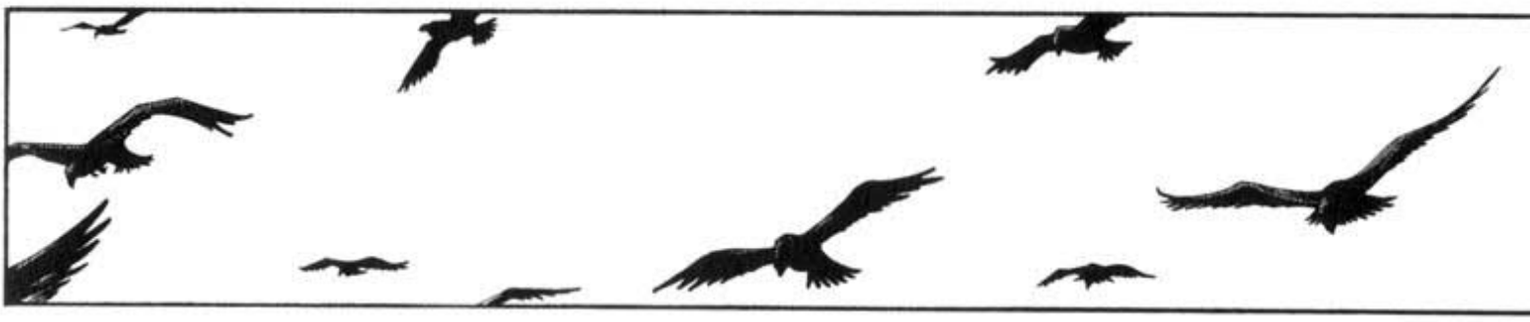
!
KLAKK
FWOOSH

KLANK

FICH

HUF
HUF

HUF
HUF



SADAKORE...

.....

SNIF
SNIFF
...
SOB
SNIFF
...
.....
.....

TOSHIMUNE'S DEAD...
...AND UGEN TOO.
OUR GOAL FOR ALL OF US TO MAKE IT TO OSAKA TOGETHER HAS BEEN CRUSHED.
SNIFF

WE'RE STILL BEING HUNTED DOWN...
AND WE'VE RUN OUT OF FOOD AND WATER...

BUT AT LEAST ONE OF US MUST SURVIVE AND RETURN TO OUR LORD.
ANOTHER ONE OF US MAY DIE.
...WE'LL HAVE TO FACE OUR ENEMIES AGAIN TOMORROW.
WE'RE WEAKENING BY THE DAY.

MEN...
IF IT'S ONLY POSSIBLE FOR THERE TO BE A SOLE SURVIVOR...
...WHO SHOULD IT BE?
WE WILL DECIDE NOW.

WHAT ?!
ICHIZŌ...
YOU HAVE THE BEST CHANCE FOR SURVIVAL.
AND SINCE YOU ARE THE YOUNGEST, YOU CAN SERVE OUR LORD THE LONGEST.
IT MUST BE YOU.

THEN KOUN SHOULD BE THE ONE...
BECAUSE YOU'RE STRONG.
BUT WHY AM I MOST LIKELY TO SURVIVE?

...!!
YOU THINK YOU'D LOSE TO KOUN WHILE HE'S CARRYING SHINJIRŌ ON HIS BACK?

.....
!!
IT'D BE DIFFERENT IF WE WERE TO CUT SHINJIRŌ DOWN HERE AND NOW.
.....
UGEN ...
.....
DO IT...
GO AHEAD AND KILL ME, KOUN ...
.....
UGEN SHOULDN'T HAVE DIED.
HE SACRIFICED HIMSELF TO SAVE ME!!
I'M THE ONE WHO SHOULD BE DEAD!!

I CAN'T BEAR IT ANYMORE, KOUN...
SHINJIRŌ ...
KILL ME!!
SHINJIRŌ ...
KILL HIM.
HOW WILL YOU SURVIVE BEARING THE WEIGHT OF A MAN WHO CALLS OUT FOR HIS OWN DEATH?
KOUN...
OUR JOURNEY BACK IS PERILOUS.

!
THUMP

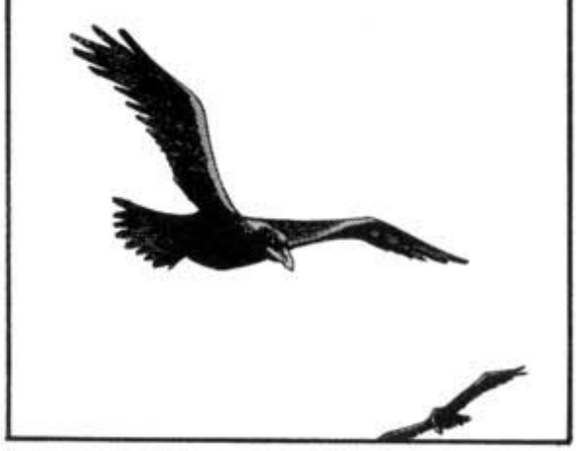
YOU HOLD ONTO THESE...

!!

THEY'RE MEMENTOS OF LIGEN AND TOSHIMUNE.

KOUN...
...!!
YOU MUST SURVIVE AND DELIVER THEM TO OUR LORD.
FWP
IT'S ALMOST DAWN...
IN ANY CASE, I SHOULD BE THE FIRST TO DIE.

I HAVE THE FEWEST YEARS LEFT IN ME.
...!!
I'LL SACRIFICE MINE TO SAVE YOU THREE.
IF OUR LIVES ARE IN DANGER ...
.....
TRUE ...
OF COURSE, I DOUBT I'LL BE KILLED UNLESS WE RUN INTO A TRULY EXTREME CIRCUMSTANCE.



KOUN
...
WE'RE HEADING BACK.

!

FICH
FICH
HEY, WAIT.

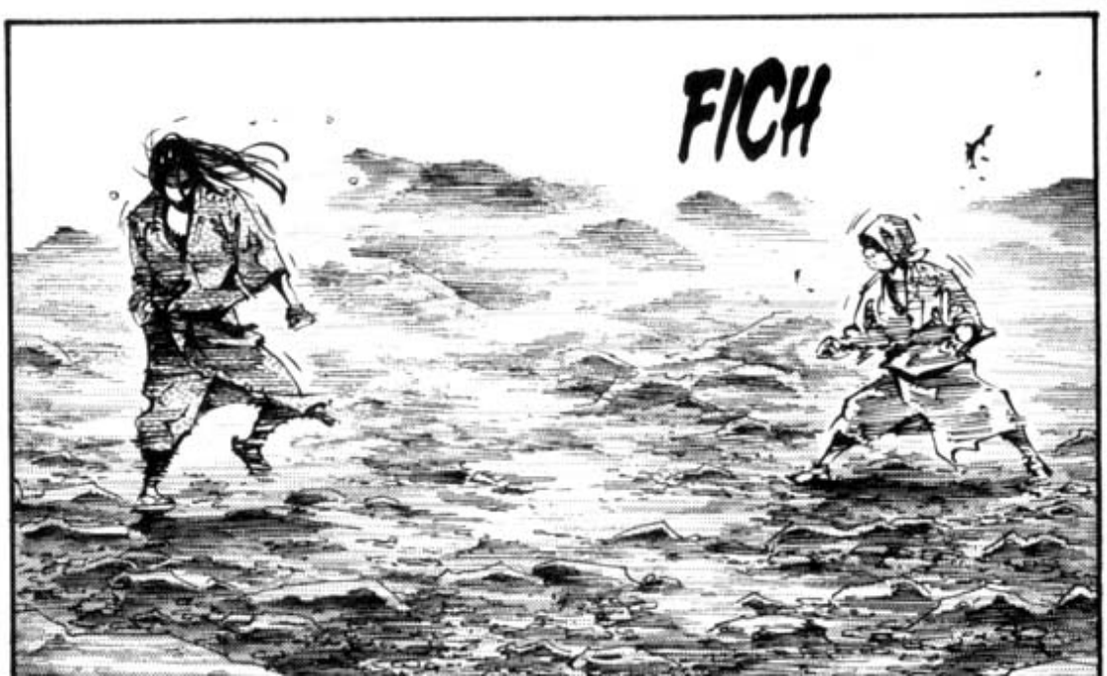
KLANKK
TUGG
FWOOSH
!!

WOOSH
!!

THUNK

HUF
HUF

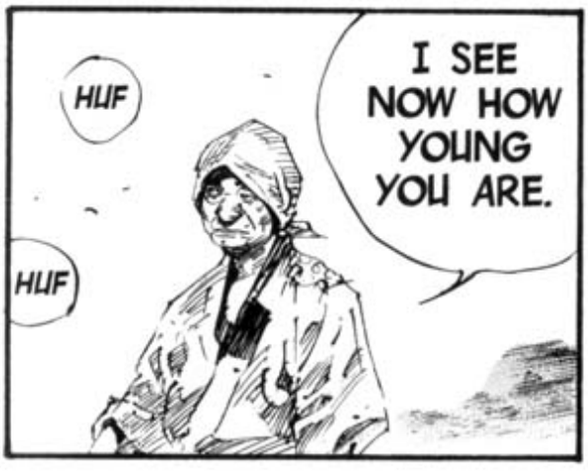
HUF
HUF


FICH

HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF

HUF
HUF

HUF
HUF


HUF
HUF
I SEE NOW HOW YOUNG YOU ARE.

YOU'RE AS YOUNG AS MY OWN SON...
NO, EVEN YOUNGER.

HUF
HUF
FICH

HUF
HUF
HUF

HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
SOME SAY THAT FLEEING IS A FORM OF WINNING.
THAT'S ONE STRATEGY TO TAKE WHEN YOU HAVE BEEN DISARMED.
.....
FWOOSH
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF

RUBB
RUBB

WHAT ARE YOU DOING ?

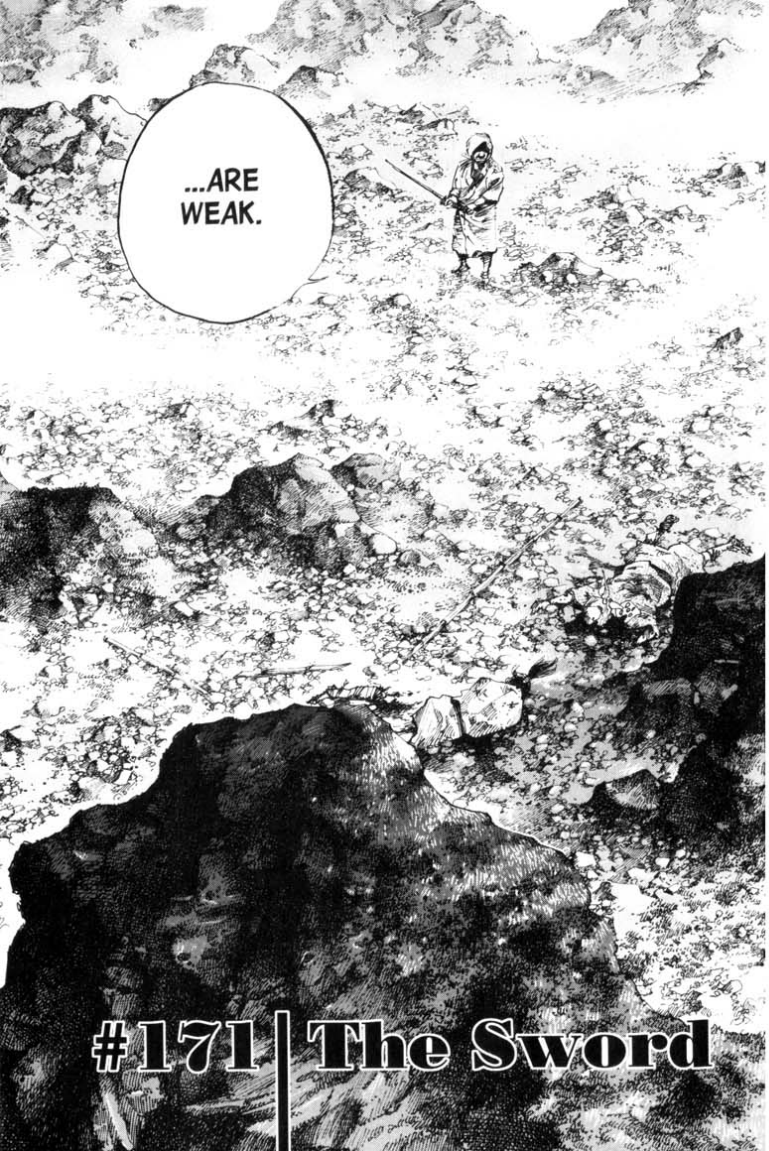
HURRY UP AND RUN AWAY...

Vagabond

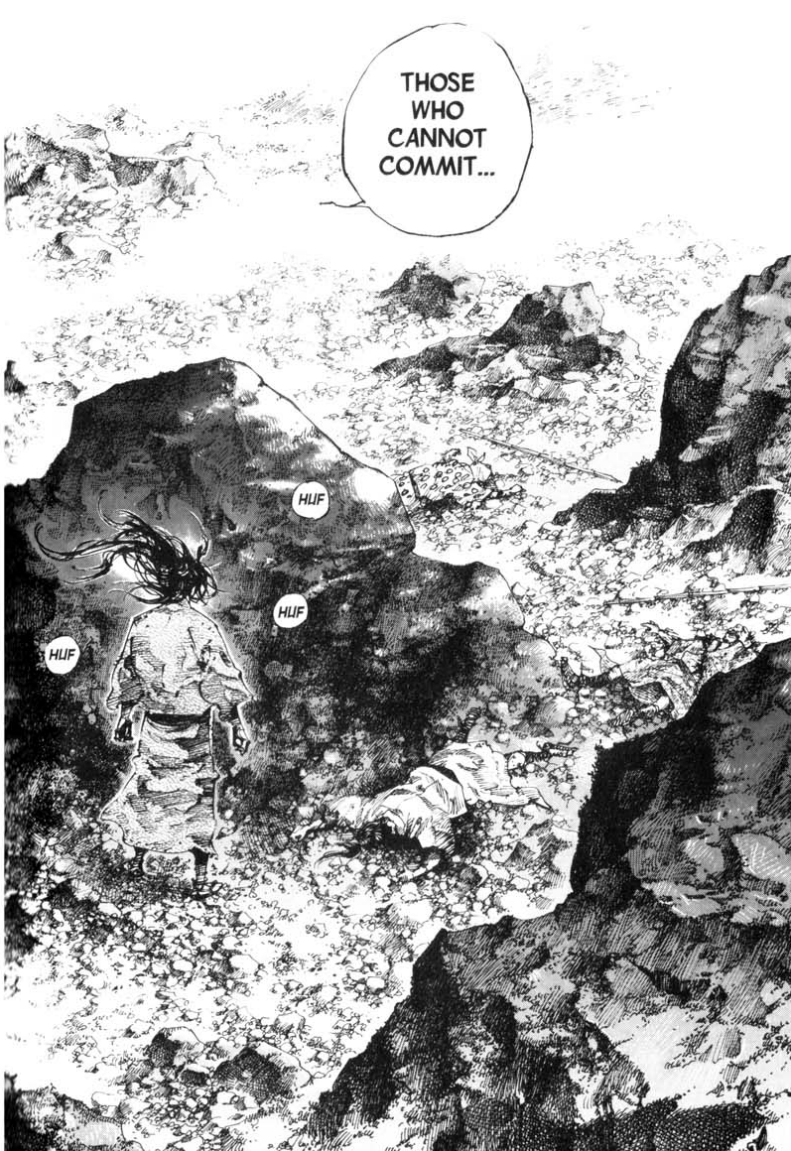
～万力鎖～

(MANRIKIGUSARI)

FLEE NOW, WHILE YOU HAVE THE CHANCE...
RUN AWAY IF THAT'S WHAT YOU'RE GOING TO DO.
HUF
HUF
HUF
YOU MUST COMMIT AND BE PREPARED FOR THE CONSEQUENCES.
BUT IF YOU'RE FIGHTING THEN COME FORWARD.
YOU CAN'T BE HALF-HEARTED.



#171 | The Sword



I'M PRONE TO PREACHING BECAUSE I'M LEADING A GROUP OF YOUNG MEN.
PAY NO HEED...
FICH
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
THOSE WHO CAN-NOT COM-MIT...
...ARE WEAK!

KOUN!!
HUF
HUF
HUF
YOU FINALLY HAD A CHANCE TO DEFEAT ME TODAY!!
YOU FAILED TO ADVANCE WHEN YOU HAD THE OPPOR-TUNITY!!
IT DOESN'T MATTER THAT WE WERE ONLY SPARRING. YOU WEREN'T COMMITTED ENOUGH TO BEAT ME.
KOUN !!
HUF
HUF
DON'T YOU SEE, KOUN?!
DIDN'T YOU NOTICE SOMETHING ABOUT THAT GUY...?
I JUST HAVE A BAD FEELING.
HUF
HUF
HUF
SADAKORE WILL BE UPSET IF WE GO BACK...
ICHIZŌ ...

HURRY, ICHIZŌ.

I'M COMMITTED NOW WHETHER I WIN OR LOSE.

HUF
HUF
TUGG

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

RRRRIP
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
KLAK
WHAT?
FICH
SO YOU HAD NO INTENTION OF RUNNING AWAY...!!

HUF
HUF
HUF

FSH
YOU WEREN'T PREPARING FOR ESCAPE...
YOU WERE GETTING READY TO CONFRONT ME.
SO YOU WANT THIS SWORD BACK...
...EVEN AT THE COST OF LOSING AN ARM.
THE SWORD...
HUF
HUF
FICH

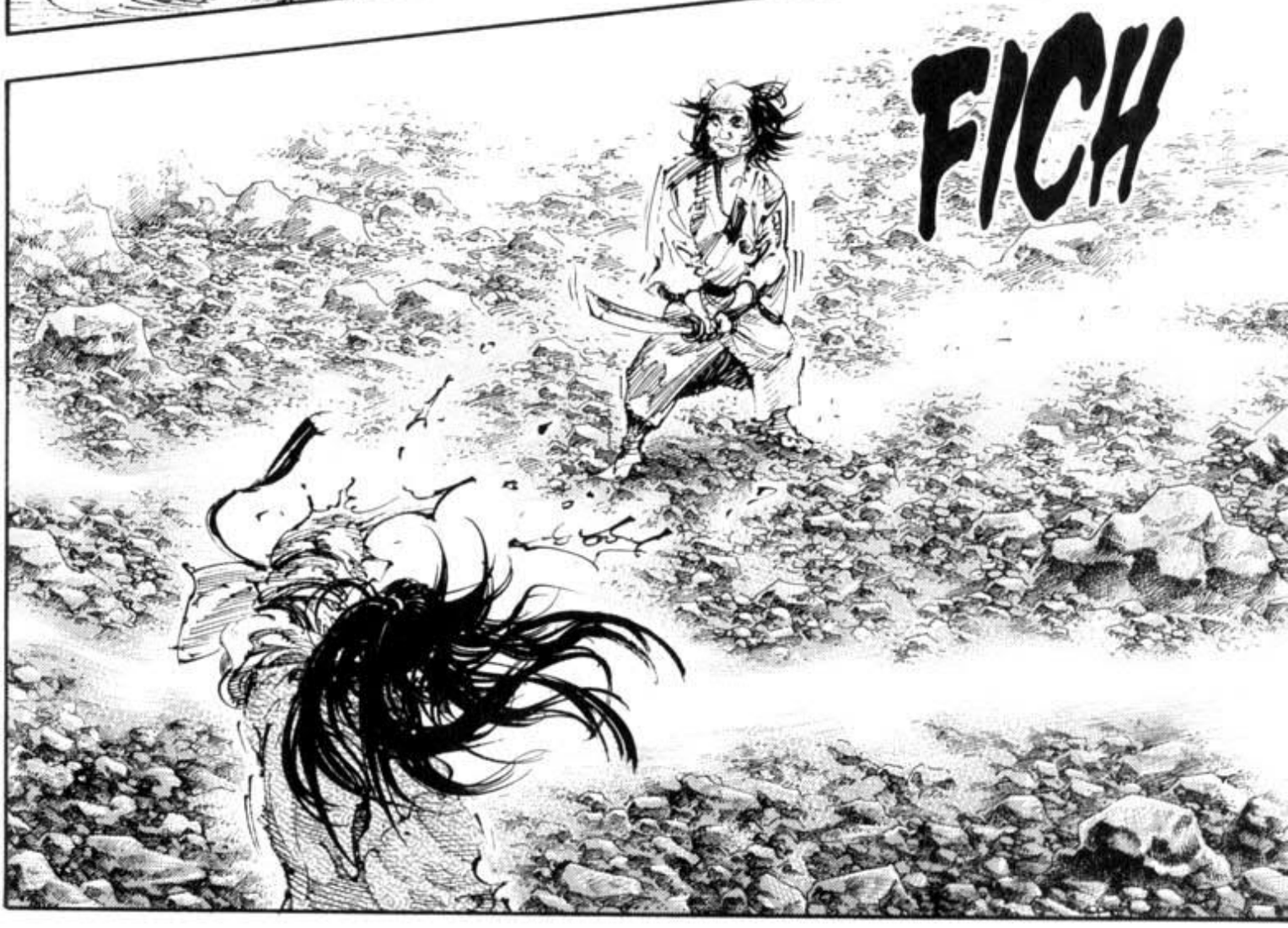
!
WHOOSH
HMPH!
HUF
HUF
HUF
I KNOW WHAT IT IS I SENSED IN YOU.
FICH
FICH
YES...
I SEE NOW...

A SENSE OF UNITY.
WHEN YOU HELD YOUR SWORD...
I FELT A CERTAIN ...
HUF
HUF
HUF
...INDESCRIBABLE UNITY.
HARMONY...
FICH
BEAUTY...
FICH
THAT'S IT, BEAUTY...

I'VE DEDICATED MOST OF MY LIFE FIGHTING WARS THROUGH THESE TURBULENT TIMES...
...YET I FIND MYSELF ENVYING YOU.
FWP
FUP
HUF
HUF
FWOOSH

FWOOSH
!

WOOSH


FICH

AHH...

HUF
HUF
HUF

AHH!
AUUHHH...

HUF
HUF
WHAT ...?
AUHH...

HUF
AND YOU CANNOT SPEAK.
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
SO...
...YOU ARE DEAF.

HUF
HUF
HUF
ARE YOU...

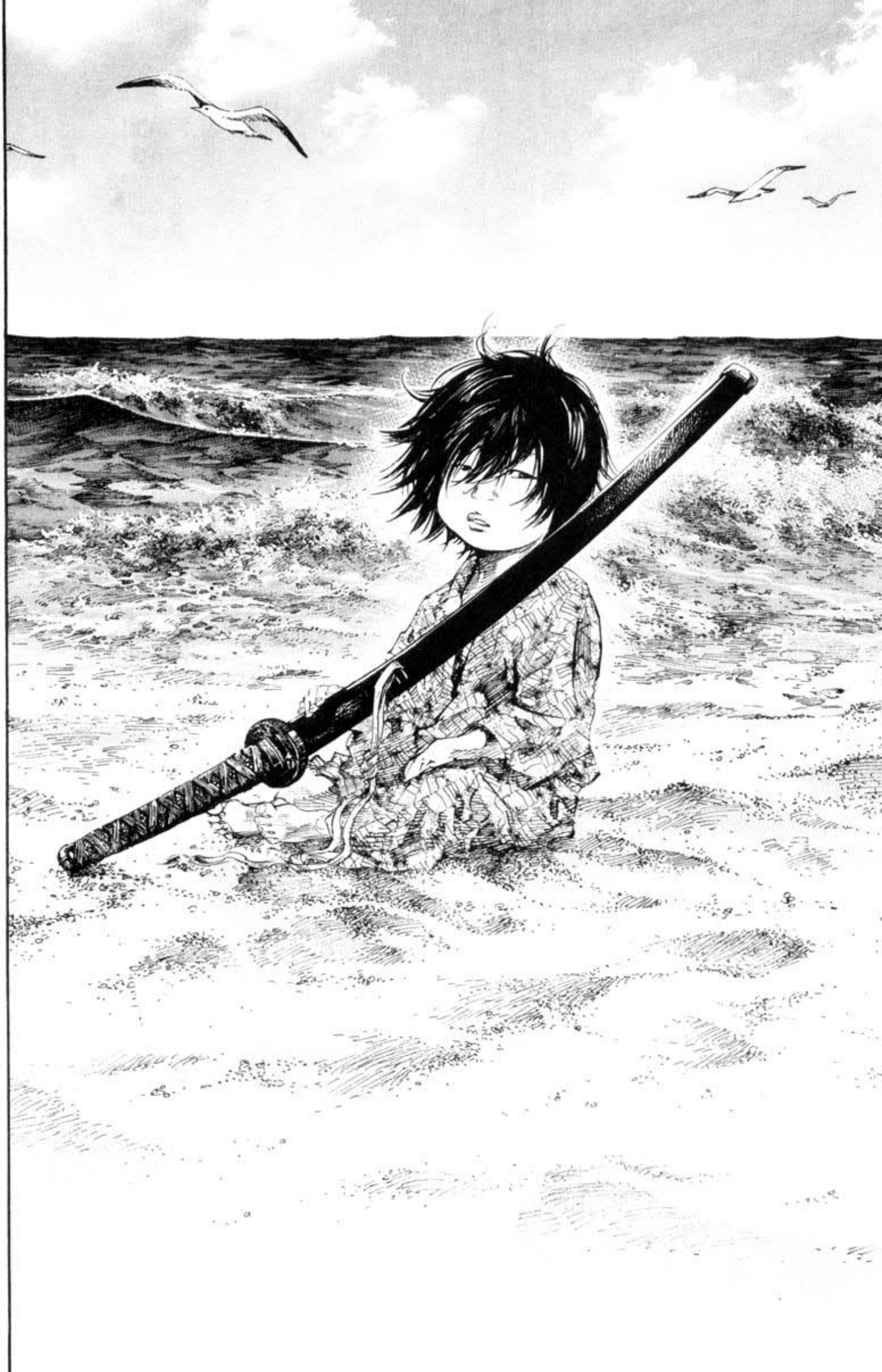
AUHH ...
HUF
HUF

HUF
HUF

ARE YOU TRYING TO TELL ME SOMETHING ?
HUF

THIS IS A STRANGE MATCH.

HUF
HUF
OR DO I ALREADY HAVE ONE FOOT IN THE GRAVE?
HUF
HUF
ARE YOU TRYING TO PUT ME UNDER SOME SPELL?
FWOOOSH
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
IN FACT, I DID INDEED JUST HAVE A STRANGE VISION...
HUF
HUF



FICH
FICH
YOU'RE DETERMINED TO ADVANCE...
SO YOU WANT THIS SWORD OF YOURS BACK.
FICH
FICH
I'D LIKE TO KNOW YOUR NAME..
I SUPPOSE THERE'S NO WAY TO FIND OUT.

HUF
HUF
FICH
FICH
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
...YOUR MASTER TRAINED YOU THOROUGHLY. OF THAT I'M CERTAIN.
WHETHER YOUR SWORD IS OF ESTEEMED LINEAGE OR NOT...
...THE SWORD IS NOT JUST A PIECE OF STEEL.
TO A MAN WHO HAS DEDICATED HIS LIFE TO THE WAY...
YOU ARE JUST LIKE ME...

I CAN SEE IT IN YOU...
YOU ARE CHERISHED BY ALL SWORDS.

FCH
FCH
FWUNK
HM!

!
SWOOSH

HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
THUNK

About the Author

VAGABOND was created by Takehiko Inoue, author of the best-selling manga *SLAM DUNK*, with over 100 million copies in print worldwide. Inoue received the 2000 Media Arts award for Manga from the Japanese Ministry of Culture as well as the 2000 Kodansha Award for best manga for his work on *VAGABOND*. In 2002, *VAGABOND* received the prestigious Tezuka award for best manga. Most recently, Inoue has been nominated for a 2003 Eisner Award for best writer/artist. To date *VAGABOND* has sold over 22 million copies throughout the world. In addition to his numerous manga titles, Inoue also created the character designs for the PlayStation basketball game, *ONE ON ONE*.

About *VAGABOND* and Miyamoto Musashi

Takehiko Inoue's *VAGABOND*, based on Eiji Yoshikawa's novel *MUSASHI*, is a fictional account of the life of Miyamoto Musashi (1584-1645). The historical figure Miyamoto Musashi, author of the philosophical strategy guide *A BOOK OF FIVE RINGS*, was a master of the sword and was revered as a "sword-saint." He founded the Niten Ichi style of sword fighting, which is typified by fighting with both long and short swords at once—holding the long sword with the right hand and the short sword with the left. Musashi was also a master of the "gentler arts"—he was a master of *sumi-e* (black ink drawings), metalworking, and woodcarving. The films that comprise *THE SAMURAI TRILOGY* directed by Hiroshi Inagaki and starring Toshiro Mifune, were also based on Yoshikawa's *MUSASHI*. Inspired by the huge success of *VAGABOND* in Japan, in 2003 NHK produced the historical period drama *MUSASHI*. Also based on Yoshikawa's novel, this drama stars kabuki actor Shinnosuke Ichikawa as Musashi and TV star Ryoko Yonekura as Otsu.

A note on names:

The names presented within the context of this comic are presented in the traditional Japanese order—surname followed by first name. "Miyamoto" is Miyamoto Musashi's last name and "Musashi" is his first name. The name of the creator of *VAGABOND*, however, has been presented first name first, last name second. "Takehiko" is the author's first name and "Inoue" is his last name.

Glossary and Extraneous Background Information

Echizen
Located in the northern part of present-day Fukui Prefecture.

Ito Ittosai (Dates unknown)
Founder of the Itto-ryu school of sword fighting. Before establishing his own style, Ittosai is said to have studied a variant of the Chujo-ryu style of sword fighting under Kanemaki Jisai's instruction.

Muso Gonnosuke (dates unknown)
Founder of the Shinto Muso-ryu school of martial arts, which mainly utilized the wooden staff. Gonnosuke is said to have been one of the many to lose to Musashi in a duel. According to some accounts he defeated Musashi in a rematch.

Sasaki Kojiro (dates unknown)
The legendary archrival of Miyamoto Musashi. Kojiro is believed to have studied the Chujo-ryu style of swordsmanship under the instruction of either Toda Seigen or Kanemaki Jisai. Kojiro was renowned for his *Tsubame-gaeshi*, or "swallow-cut" technique which was inspired by the movement of a swallow in flight.

The Sengoku Period and the Battle of Sekigahara
The Warring States or *Sengoku* period (1482-1558) in Japan was a time of chaos and conflict. Central authorities, in the form of the imperial court and the shogunate, had grown increasingly weaker, and the land was effectively ruled autonomously by numerous *daimyo* (domainal lords). Looking to expand their spheres of control, the *daimyo* were constantly at war with each other. One *daimyo* in particular, Oda Nobunaga, set out on a mission to unify Japan by means of conquest. Incredibly successful, by the time of his assassination in 1582, he managed to control approximately one-third of all of Japan. One of Nobunaga's chief generals, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, became Nobunaga's successor to carry on the quest for unification. Through a process of conquest and conciliation, Hideyoshi succeeded in creating an orderly federation amongst the *daimyo,* and by 1590, order was restored to Japan under Hideyoshi's rule. Hideyoshi's death in 1598, however, presented the question of succession. Most of the *daimyo* from the domains in the west remained loyal to the Toyotomi Clan and its five-year-old heir, Toyotomi Hideyori. Tokugawa Ieyasu, however, leading the major *daimyo* from central and eastern Japan, challenged the Toyotomi clan's leadership. The two sides clashed at the Battle of Sekigahara (1600) in Mino (located in present-day Gifu Prefecture) where the Tokugawa claimed an overwhelming victory. From that point on, the Tokugawa clan would effectively rule Japan for the next 250 years.

Shinmen Takezo
Miyamoto Musashi's boyhood name.

Takuan Soho (1573-1645)
A monk of the Rinzai sect of Zen Buddhism, by the time Takuan was thirty-seven, he was appointed abbot of the leading temple of the Rinzai sect, Daitokuji. Takuan was an important figure whose acute and brutally honest advice was sought by influential and powerful figures such as Emperor Go Mizuno and the shogun Tokugawa Iemitsu. His correspondence to Yagyu Munenori discussing Zen and swordsmanship entitled *THE UNFETTERED MIND* has become an influential treatise in both the areas of philosophy and martial arts. The pickled daikon radish, *takuan*, also bears his name.

The Yagyu Clan
Yagyu Muneyoshi Sekishusai (1527-1606) was the founder of the famed Yagyu-Shinkage school of sword fighting. His son Yagyu Munenori (1571-1646) was one of Tokugawa's key generals at the Battle of Sekigahara. Munenori was appointed as the official fencing instructor of the Tokugawa Clan, and in 1632 the Yagyu were appointed as the *ometsuke*—responsible for the surveillance of the *daimyo*. Although the Yagyu clan has been depicted in Kazuo Koike's *LONE WOLF AND CUB* as the plotters of the downfall of Itto Ogami, the general Japanese popular culture take on the Yagyu Clan is more positive. More specifically, Munenori's son, Yagyu Jubei (1607-1650), is viewed as a wandering hero protecting the people from evildoers.

Yoshioka Kempo (dates unknown)
A distinguished warrior during the *Sengoku* period (1482-1558) and the founder of the renowned Yoshioka school of sword fighting. Yoshioka Kempo mastered the Kyohachi style of swordmanship and then modified it to form the Yoshioka style. In the context of Inoue's *VAGABOND,* as well as in Yoshikawa's *MUSASHI*, Yoshioka Seijuro and Denshichiro are Kempo's sons who are historically thought to have dueled with Miyamoto Musashi on numerous occasions.

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